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**JOURNAL OF  
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**The Vows and Humanism  
Celibacy and Christlikeness  
Children for Tomorrow  
The Word of Life Concluded**

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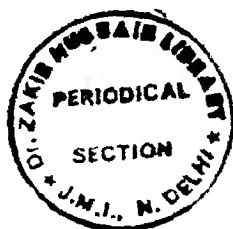
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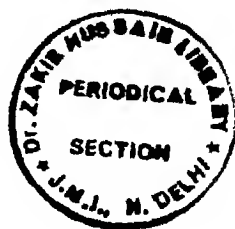
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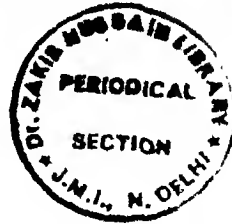
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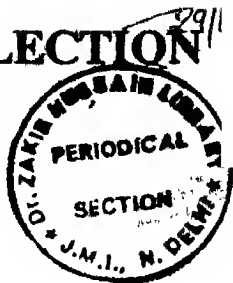
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# **Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection**

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# *Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection*

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## **The Three Ingredients of Authentic Humanism**

*An Autobiographical Essay on the Religious Vows*

Aloysius PIERIS, S.J.

Starting from an analysis of the basic component of authentic humanism, the experience of beauty, humour and friendship, the well-known Asian theologian and dialogist (Tulana Research Centre, Gonawala-Kelaniya, Sri Lanka) interprets the depth meaning of the religious vows in the Christian tradition, poverty, obedience and chastity, at the same time exposing the dangers implicit in a wrong understanding and practice of the vows.

**T**HIS ESSAY was begun at the request of the Editor of *Bread and Breath*, the Samuel Rayan Felicitation Volume. But owing to sudden illness I could not complete it in time. Hence I promised the editor of the Festschrift that, once I finish writing, I would publish it myself in an appropriate journal.

The choice of the theme of this essay is dictated by two considerations. The first is the man in whose honour I write this paper: Samuel Rayan, a great humanist living his Christian faith within the Ignatian spiritual tradition. The other is the time and the location in which I write it: Sri Lanka 1990. These thoughts are being formulated in the midst of a chaos which this country has to live through, with nothing to hold on to, except whatever is left of the human in suffering masses. At no time in the history of our people has the *humanum* been so tantalizingly present by its apparent absence and, therefore, desperately desired and sanguinously sought. Yet my indomitable faith and hope in the love that we humans are still capable of, allow my thoughts to scintillate with optimism. For, they are my own testimony to the *humanum* I have encountered in those who continue to speak and work for peace.

### **Part One: A Christian Reading of Humanum**

#### **I. Christ and the Human: A Theological Mood**

When caught up in a chaotic whirlpool of political and ideological confusion, such as the one I have just alluded to, the safest strategy is to plunge into the ever

available currents of humanism, whatever be their immediate source; they are sure to toss us into the right stream. One learns this strategy from *Gaudium et spes*, wherein the Council did not stop with the earlier ecclesiastical habit of resorting to "natural law" and "reason" as the only plank which salvages social ethics from the deluge of ideological misinterpretation; the Council (GS, Pt I, chs 1-3) seems to have tempered this stoic mannerism of the past by consciously looking in the direction of contemporary humanism for possible avenues for the church's engagement with God's redeeming (i.e., humanizing) presence in the world of structural sin.

Would that we follow this lead of the Council in our attempt to fathom the mystery of God as well ask the mystery of man and woman! What if we abandon our addiction to philosophical definitions of the divine and resort, instead, to the saner praxis of fathoming the human, lest our compulsion to possess divine knowledge — the ever recurrent cause of our Fall (Gen 3:5-6) — might once again, as it did in the aftermath of Chalcedon, end up in political elimination of persons, ecclesiastical intrigues, deposition of pastors from their seats and other inhuman deeds in the name of a rationally defined Truth about God's inner nature?

If a definition is what matters, why not begin our search with Yahweh's own humanistic self-definition as the Liberator who dares to stand in open conflict with the slave masters of this world, compelling them to release their slaves to serve Yahweh alone and thus become a family of free humans (Ex 20:2; Lev 26:12-13; etc.)?

Adam, the dust-man who lives in us, crawls up heavenly heights (to rob the form of God) in knowledge and power only to be hurled down to the depths of nakedness and cunning, absorbing the form of the Serpent (Gen 3). But the Christ into whom we are baptized, as the early Christians sang (Phil 2:6-11), did not have to rob the form of God since he possessed it, but plunged down, truly *falling* in love with our humanity, becoming like us both "in appearance" (*homoiomati*) and in [psycho-physical] "structure" (*schemati*), accepting the lowest social condition, namely, that of a slave, both in life (v. 7) and in death (v.8), so that he would be raised in his humanity as Master and Lord in solidarity with all who have been made slaves by the inhumanity of ambitious, serpent-inspired and power-hungry Adams.

It is not merely in our definition of God that we may slip into the anti-humanist groove; we do so even in the way we have been trying to define the human as *animal rationale*. The underlying equation, "beast + reason = human person," tells us only of the hominized beast [i.e., Adam as the unredeemed cosmos] who still continues to live by the law of the jungle, the law of the "survival of the fittest"; besides, reason, left to itself, is often the most deceptive part of our being, justifying what the beast in us desires; it is the creator of dehumanizing ideologies.

But the evolution of the hominized beast into a humanized angel — 'angel' in the literal sense of a 'messenger' of flesh and blood who announces the imminent liberation — is the transformation that heralds the new earth and the new heavens. The *hominization* of the cosmos is a process that has littered the earth with 'rational

animals', i.e., hominized beast [Adams]; being an unfinished series of events, it ceases to be redemptive if it does not continue as a process of *humanization*, that is to say, as a progressive movement towards the *humanum*.

*Humanism* is the rubric under which we understand our own consciously organized and willful 'taking over' of this process. Obviously, a movement or an organization does not become humanist simply because its advocates name it such. Hence we need to begin our inquiry with a tentative declaration about (not a definition of) humanism. My suggestion is that humanism be seen as an indefinable psycho-social ethos charged with a personal and communitarian agitation for and an incessant re-affirmation of the *humanum*; and let the *humanum* be recognized as the interior abyss to be fathomed in the depths of our personal being no less than the ultimate horizon of our societal strivings: our Absolute Future (Total Liberation) which draws us from a purely 'hominal' seed-stage to the full flowering of a 'humanized' cosmos, that is to say the birth of the Cosmic Wo/Man.

Since the 'human' is our immanent centre lying transcendently *outside* our 'hominal' circumference, our growth towards it is an 'eccentric' movement. But God-in-Jesus, who loves us with a human heart and constitutes our Centre, is equally eccentric in that this God, too, gravitates towards the *humanum* as God's own Centre lying outside the divine circle (Phil 2:6-11). One embraces Christianity officially when one believes that Jesus is God's eccentricity and that in Jesus we all become human by being eccentric ourselves, i.e., by striving to make God our human centre.

A Christian, in other words, is one who believes that Jesus is the focus of God's human concern, a concern that coincides with our Godward ascent. Jesus is the nucleus of the *humanum*, the nucleus which — not without our efforts at continuing his struggle for fullness and freedom — is ever growing towards the "pleroma of the *humanum*" or, in technical terms, the fullness of Christ. Since, however, all of Jesus is Christ but not all of Christ is Jesus, it follows that to proclaim "Jesus is Christ" is to demonstrate by word and deed that by following Jesus the Man in his eccentricity, we, together with all creation, are becoming in him and with him the epiphany of full humanity. Therefore, to strive towards the *humanum*, as another great Jesuit humanist, Teilhard de Chardin, taught us, is to exercise our obligatory role in Christogenesis.

## 2. The Three Vows of the Humanist: a Personal Discovery

Once I develop a taste for the humanist flavour of Christian discipleship and the Christological savour of humanism, I may begin to wonder why some men and women who have vowed to follow Jesus by evangelical poverty, obedience and chastity, are sometimes avowed enemies of the *humanum*. Here, my reflections — somewhat autobiographical — could literally be the 'reflections' of Samuel the humanist, in that his approach to life, as far as I glimpse into it, could serve as a mirror which 'reflects' my own personal groping for an adequate answer to this question.

Very early in my Jesuit life, I seemed to have dreaded the vows as agents of dehumanization and looked upon the first years of my formation as a deception. The vows, I said to myself, were not worth living if they could not evoke the human in me. They apparently failed the humanist test: the capacity to transform the hominized beast in me into a human announcer of freedom.

After a long period of doubt and search, after seeking advice from a few Jesuit counsellors (who were more Jansenists than Jesuits), I fell back on Fr Luigi de Mattia's suggestion that I should suspend for a while my pre-occupation with the vows and focus my attention, instead, on events or tendencies in my life which stood the limus test, that is to say, which brought out the human not only in me but in all who were associated with me.

This was a great experiment, and a successful one. I realized to my pleasant surprise that there were in me — and therefore, presumably in most others — three impulses which could easily be designated as the three vows of the humanist: an intense search for beauty, frequent explosions of humour and an insatiable thirst for intimacy. Though each of these was an Immanent Force re-creating my spirit from within me, I discovered that each was also a response to the seductive power of a Transcendent Source that was totally other than my own being.

This discovery made me even more inquisitive about the role of the three religious vows I was made to pronounce as a condition for being accepted into religious life. For it seemed that my unbridled passion for aesthetic pleasure was in direct conflict with the vow of poverty; my humour tended to ridicule the possibility of other humans demanding of me an obedience due only to God; and my success at 'particular friendship' right from the first flowering of youth seemed to flout the basic requirements of vowed chastity.

At the end of a dark corridor of conflicts and constraints lived through with stubborn determination and rash adventurism — which at that time did not seem to merit the title 'faith' or 'hope', though it certainly does now, in retrospect — I came out with a clearer vision of what I had always sensed in the subliminal zones of my being as the most profound implication of the three religious vows: namely, that it was the spirit of evangelical poverty that made me seek nothing less than what is most desirable for the whole of my being: 'Beauty ever ancient and ever new'; that it was my sense of humour that made obedience (contrary to my Novice Master's pessimistic predictions) a celebration of God's word personally addressed to me; and that human intimacy which was warned against as a direct violation of chastity, was in fact the guarantor of the affective maturity which that vow was meant to produce in me.

Thus the three vows not in the way they were explained to me in the fifties, but in their merger with the three humanizing ex-periences of my life — became for me (I repeat, *for me*), the three pillars of authentic humanism, or at least of *my* humanism. Could this be true of others, too? I am curious to know.

### 3. Beauty First

Our sense of beauty is our capacity to see the invisible *wholeness* asserting itself beneath our fragmented existence; to taste the bliss of *final emancipation* already in the passing joys that linger in our memory and to touch the *intangible glory of the End-Time* at every step taken forward in Its light; to discover and venerate every one of *God's countless icons* (Gen 2:27) made of earth's dust and divine breath (Gen 2:7) and zealously guard even the least of them from every kind of desecration; and above all, to delight in the glory of our Maker's image which we humans, each and all, "bare" in the very process of co-creating with Her, the final artifact: *our truly human future*, indeed a New Creation.

"To seek Beauty in all things and all things in Beauty" — if I may reformulate the classical Ignatian ideal in the light of the climactic contemplation in the Spiritual Exercises — is one of the three foundational experiences of humanism. Therefore, the humanist's starting point is Beauty, not the Beast. Mary of Magdala was able to recognize what was ugly in her and wash it off with a warm gush of tears only when she had her first irresistible glimpse into the exquisite beauty of the Man Jesus. She has, since then, become an object lesson for educating people in the aesthetics of the Kingdom. "She has done a beautiful thing to me," says Jesus (Mk 14:6). The gospel, which is the wonder of God's human fellowship, can never be told anywhere in the world without mentioning this event, as Jesus himself forecast (Mk 14:9) — so normative is her experience for all generations.

By contrast, those who are prone to begin their spiritual journey with the elimination of the ugly, rather than discerning it in the light of the beautiful, generally fall into one or the other of two anti-humanist grooves: *stoic indifference* and *pathological messianism*. Neither is capable of the revolutionary change that humanism promises.

Let me first deal with stoicism, a poison that has infected many streams of spirituality.

The stoics begin their spiritual journey with an encounter with the ugly; hence they search for the realm of Beauty in the solitudinal bliss of their individual selves, seeking support from 'reason' (or 'natural law?'), to justify their passive selfcomplacency. Theirs is a degenerate form of gnosticism. They escape from the present reality, the very shrine in which Beauty resides, for they claim to contemplate It in what they consider to be Its 'pure' form, which obviously is an abstraction.

Such words as 'indifference' or 'apatheia' which denote interior freedom and equanimity are interpreted negatively, and of course, falsely, as a refusal to be sullied by the squalor of contemporary social reality, whereas in a humanist context they connote our aesthetic pre-disposition to desire first and thus to discover the beautiful in the midst of the ugly. When God, the supremely delectable one, is recognized as the source of our enjoyment of the world, then everything takes its place in relation to that source (Sp Ex 23). Such is not what stoics mean by

indifference. Their preoccupation is to immunize themselves from all contact with the ugly.

"Why waste time weaving a gigantic piece of leather to cover the thorny path that leads to Freedom?" they seem to argue. "Let each one cover the feet with a pair of leather shoes and walk on the thorns!" They do not remove evil; they simply insulate themselves from it, each one individually. By contrast, the humanists who have a foretaste of Freedom, and for whom beauty is the *forma apriori* even in their perception of the ugly, would rather clear the ground before them as they walk, knowing that the weaker brothers and sisters would follow them sooner or later.

The stoic, to change the metaphor, acts like the Tropical Monitor, that massive amphibian reptile which inflates itself with its own breath to make itself insensitive to the pain inflicted by stones and sticks of its 'human' enemies. I presume that one can discipline oneself to acquire this kind of "stoic indifference" in the face of the ugly only in so far as one has not risked tasting the bitterness of the ugly by seeking to savour the beauty that hides in everyday life. Indeed, how would one fight the foul, without first feasting on the fair?

The principle we are educating by means of these reflections is a simple one: aesthetic pleasure does not intoxicate our inner senses but sharpens them to perceive the ugly that lurks even in beautiful things. The horrid reality of sin, oppression and injustice is monitored only by one whose mind and heart have, in some way, savoured the exquisite taste of Beauty. In fact, beauty recognized and relished tends to make us not merely sensitive but even *over-sensitive* to the unsightly. And this is the danger which stoics strive to avoid by numbing their senses to the foul and the fair alike, misnaming it 'indifference'.

#### 4. Humour as Celebration of Beauty

The most repulsive sight that has ever met my eyes, so far, were the crimson waters of our rivers with the bloating bodies of once beautiful boys and girls floating supine, crying to heaven for vengeance. Uglier still was the stoic withdrawal of religious men and women from this arena of sin under the pretext of not being called [by God, allegedly] to dabble in politics. Ugly too was the *pathological messianism* of the so-called Sinhala freedom fighters who, in their zeal to eliminate the hideous monster of state terrorism and in their justifiable determination to restore human wholeness to our chronically diseased society, resorted to the ugliest possible means that hominized beasts are capable of: liquidation of the noblest of humans and the destruction of life-sustaining structures of our society.

I would not belittle the bravery with which they battled with the Beast to bring Beauty back from its grip. But their assault on the Beast was so beastly that it succumbed to the very beastliness it was meant to remove. They turned reckless, ruthless and remorseless to the point of insanity. They only helped the demon of state terrorism to go from strength to strength. The Tamil militants in the North, at the time of writing, have not succeeded totally in avoiding a similar rut of isolation.

### THE THREE INGREDIENTS OF AUTHENTIC HUMANISM

Let us acknowledge first that sensitiveness to what is lovely is simultaneously a sensitiveness to that which is not lovely. Hence our aesthetic urge runs the risk of reinforcing our natural revulsion towards the unpleasant and of generating rancour and bitterness, unless a sense of humour is allowed to temper our sense of beauty.

A true revolutionary's first qualification is to have acquired the humanist's art of smiling at the ugly in one's own self. Hitler and Stalin were not capable of laughing at themselves. They took their egos so seriously that, gradually, their own selves replaced the cause they idolized: the Super Man or the Communist Society. And, at what risk to humanity! The collapse of the Soviet experiment in Eastern Europe is history's monumental verdict on pathological messianism; it is the tragedy of a revolutionary programme which had no place for comedy. True Freedom Fighters are not megalomaniacs who sacrifice the basic right of the masses on the altar of an alleged revolution.

Every organized society, civil or ecclesiastical, that does away with the court-jester and the cartoonist has eliminated an effective means of prophetic humanism: humour which exposes the nudity of the hominized Beast that sits on the throne, robed in Beauty Invisible!

Humour is Beauty in possession of Itself, and, therefore, brings out the ridiculous or the laughable elements in the ugly. There are many instances in which the ugly can be laughed out of existence. For, when the light of the End-Time is allowed to expose the ridiculous in the follies and foibles of humankind, we can share God's laughter at the wickedness of our nation (Ps 59:8). God is, as the psalmist says (Ps 2:4), "enthroned in heaven" and laughs before she rebukes the oppressive nations. One sure sign of the coming of the Kingdom, as Jesus clearly tells us in the third beatitude (Lk 6:21), is the laughter that dries up our tears. From Psalm 126 we learn how a little experience God's liberative intervention on behalf of those who dare to dream, brings laughter to their mouths and songs to their tongues (verses 1-2).

True humour, therefore, is a celebration of Beauty; a foretaste of the Resurrection of Jesus which, after all, is God's last laugh at Death and its ugly agents! The true activists, the genuine zealots of ultimate beauty, the authentic humanists, are recognized by their readiness to celebrate in the midst of the struggle. What made the Nicaraguan Revolution so unique is that the people were able to feast together and laugh their way through the post-revolutionary reconstruction of their nation in the face of diabolical constraints. This was totally unheard of in previous 'revolutions'.

This is why liturgy is so essential a feature of Christian activism. It is the pathological messiahs who cannot distinguish an empty rite which is not born of liberative struggles, from an authentic liturgy which is an ecclesial celebration of the paschal mystery into which we are thrown by our passion for the *humanum*. It is their inability to celebrate that make their messianism pathological. The Minjung theology of Korea, the first articulation of a truly Asian liberation theology, teaches



us how crucially important humour and celebration are in life-struggles of the Minjung (the masses). In practically all cosmic religions the role of prophecy is exercised through mask dances.

On the other hand, cynicism and sarcasm which pass for humour, are actually caricatures, that is to say, unaesthetic deviations of it. They are humour without beauty. When Abraham and Sarah laughed (Gen 17:17; 18:12), it was not humour: it was cynicism, for they did not see their prospective parenthood in God's light, in the perspective of the Future. For, authentic humour is rooted in the [theological] virtue of hope. Hence all laughter that is not of the Kingdom turns into mourning (Lk 6:25) and must be desisted from (Jas 4:9).

Thus I am persuaded that the two-fold act of desiring the comely and discerning the comic in all things around us is, so to say, an eschatologically inseparable experience. When, therefore, I hear someone cite Dostoievsky's saying that Beauty alone is indispensable for humanity's survival, I always hasten to add, "not without humour."

### 5. Friendship: the Sacrament of the Human

Our sense of beauty is an act of FAITH in our glorious Future anticipated here and now in our struggle against the ugly. Our sense of humour is an act of HOPE which makes us celebrate the certitude of our victory in the midst of false starts, setbacks and failures. But LOVE is the greatest of the three, St Paul insists (1 Cor 13:13). Without love there is no music, but only noise (1 Cor 13:1). It is love that beautifies us with truly human qualities (1 Cor 13:4-7).

Can faith last and hope endure without love as their basis? That Beauty 'ever ancient and ever new' which exposes the ugly and makes us smile in hope, is also the very Love by which we love one another, that is to say, God who can be known only by way of human love (1 Jn 4:7-8). This love, therefore, cannot be reduced to philanthropy or allowed to evaporate into a platonic sublimation; it must sink its roots in the particular and the concrete; it must be contextualized in interpersonal intimacy. It necessarily begins with one before it spreads to many, like God's friendship with Abraham. Love knows a way of multiplying without dividing.

Friendship, which cannot but be particular, is the most tangible proof of humanism, the most glowingly visible presence of the *humanum* since it is by far the most cathartic encounter with the transcendent in that it threatens one's ego by destroying its insulations and making it fall from the secure heights of ignorance and innocence to the risk-ridden terrain of affective growth.

Friendship, if I may dare to use terms borrowed from mystical theology, is an "infused love," so to say, which gives me courage to welcome the dissolution of my ego through the invasion of another into the frantically fortified armoury of my interior castle. Once my defenses are broken, once I am totally disarmed by love received and love given then I emerge crucified and risen, in a spirit of self-transcending openness towards that Other who it is that meets me in all others.

For, what friendship does to me is to expose everything ugly in me to the purifying love-flames of someone already recognized as beautiful. The agony of this catharsis turns into an ecstasy of intimacy only to the degree humour enters the process. Weakness artfully hidden from my childhood, the ugly stains and scars of my subconscious skirmishes with reality, and stacks of uncleared garbage, now seen for the first time with the eyes of another, could indeed be a shattering blow to my self-image and absolutely humiliating; hence it would hardly be a healing and wholesome experience if laughter and celebration are not there to prevent that humiliation from degenerating into an aggressive self-pity.

Our search for intimacy is, incontestably, a perilous voyage of discovery; but there is a pearl of great price which makes it worth the risk: *chaste* beauty and *pure* humour.

No wonder, some spiritual masters in the middle ages stressed the indispensable role that friendship plays in spiritual life. Abelard and Heloise, Francis and Clara, Beatrice and Dante, the two monks Bernard and Malachi, and many others since then have witnessed to this healthy tradition. The Buddha too believed in the need of a "beautiful friend" (*kalyana mitra*) for any one keen on spiritual progress.

All these men and women were great humanists. Jesus went furthest of all in practically identifying the whole process of redemption as friendship, God's friendship with us in Jesus, to be spread contagiously through our friendship with one another (Jn 15:9-17); and by friendship, he obviously meant *intimacy*, that is, self-disclosure (Jn 15:15). And self-disclosure is self-exposure which is another name for disarmament, an absolute condition for total peace.

## Part Two: A Humanist Reading of the Religious Vows

### 6. Some Theological Presuppositions

My next step is to develop further the coincidence between the three ingredients of humanism explained so far and the three religious vows. However, the observations I make in this regard here presuppose the theology of religious life which I have already sketched out in an earlier article entitled "Religious vows and the Reign of God" (*The Way, Supplement*, Summer 1990, pp. 3-15). To make my reflections more intelligible, I wish to sum up the major trends of that argument.

There, I proposed that obedience and poverty could not have originally been two "counsels of perfection" but merely two aspects of one basic baptismal commitment. By the evangelical obedience we proclaim in word and deed that Yahweh (God of Moses, the God of Jesus, God universally known through creation and conscience) is the only Sovereign Ruler of our life; and by evangelical poverty, we declare in word and deed that no other god (be it Capital/Mammon, the Civil State, or the Church; the individual self or the collective ego; dogma, rite or law, language or race; colour, creed or class, in short, any human-made or God-made creature) shall be allowed to replace Yahweh as the supreme Law of our life. The first is a positive declaration while the second is the negative formulation of one

and the same faith proclaimed in both liturgy and life: "We have no Sovereign other than Yahweh."

Poverty and obedience, as we had demonstrated in the article, are more than just vows to be taken by a few seekers of perfection; rather, they are the kerygmatic and prophetic commitment of the whole body of Christ, which is the Church. Through them we proclaim and anticipate Yahweh's reign as a reign of love and freedom based on justice and equality, believing as we do that all gods other than Yahweh are manufactured and manipulated by the rich and the powerful who thrive on slave-labour, whereas the *humanum* reappears in the centre of our world only when Yahweh Who is Love and Justice is installed as the sole Ruler. This is the Good News of the Reign of God for which Jesus died, and for which the church lives.

It was also pointed out that the word of God in the Bible untolds itself against the background of slave empires such as Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria and later Greece and Rome. Their ignorance of Yahweh and their consequent idolatry accounted for their oppression of the weak. Despite such examples of dehumanization before them, the chosen people, too, renounced its exclusive allegiance to Yahweh when they adopted the socio-economic model of those same "developed" nations and grew, like them, into a pyramidally structured society, drawing the wrath of the prophets and the curse of God's poor.

Regretfully, the church too has absorbed from an idolatrous secular society a feudal and imperial model of "hierarchology" (Congar's coinage) and the mentality that goes with it. Although in conformity with Vatican II, the Law of the church was made to recognize an ecclesiology based on communion, yet the canonical understanding of episcopal authority including that of the Pope is hardly free of the feudal framework. No renewal is possible till 'poverty' and 'obedience' which characterize the follower of Jesus leave the dead letter of church documents and become the pulsating core of its organizational existence. Until then, the church remain a counter-sign of its own baptismal proclamation: "We have no Ruler other than Yahweh"

Moreover, the traditional attitude of expecting a few men and women (so called 'Religious') to practice vicariously the two-fold baptismal vow that the whole church is called to pronounce, prevents the church from becoming what it is called to be: a 'contrast society' by means of which the God of Jesus could challenge the Babylons and Egypts of our time, and reveal to all nations God's project of a truly human community of peoples. What must we do with salt that is no more salty?

Let me reiterate that these *socio-political* implications of the two proclamational vows (obedience and poverty) clearly delineated in the article referred to, are not set aside but presupposed in the following reflections in which my focus is on the *personal* dimension of this Christian vocation. Also taken for granted is my other suggestion made in that same article, and substantiated with examples from history of Religious Life, namely, that celibacy ceases to be prophetic and becomes

a counter-sign of the kingdom whenever it is not practiced in the context of the two kerygmatic vows.

It is against the background of these presuppositions that I wish to reflect over the humanist contents of the three Religious vows.

### 7 Small is Beautiful: Evangelical Poverty as an Aesthetic Experience

The Ignatian exercises encourage me to become an activist ever engaged in the service of the least of Jesus' sisters and brothers but not without an *aesthetic enjoyment of God in all things and of all things in God*. This ideal of a perpetual feasting on God's creation in the midst of work had been described as "contemplation in the action." The key word that suggests this ideal in the Ignatian vocabulary is "consolation" rather than contemplation; a word that revealed its true meaning only when I began to satisfy my God-given right to relish God's creation, in the midst of my activity. But soon experience showed me that such 'consolation' does not come automatically. Rather, it is a spiritual mood that coincides with that attitude which Ignatius describes with the word "indifference," i.e., that interior freedom which comes from evangelical poverty. Let me spell it out in the light of my own experience.

There are two pre-requisites that an aesthetic experience of God in all things and all things in God. *Non-addiction* to anything whatsoever is the first. The other is *critical* distance from everything on earth. They are each a mental mood that one is not born with, but something to be acquired and fostered until it becomes a permanent posture of the heart. This arduous process is what evangelical poverty is all about: a growth in aesthetic sensibility.

By vowing religious poverty, I have taken upon myself the responsibility to free myself from addiction to or obsessive dependence on any creature. For such dependence would dull my aesthetic sensibility; I would become an 'alcoholic' of a sort, incapable of relishing my potion because I intoxicate myself with it. Addiction prevents me from distinguishing ecstasy from inebriation. Surfeit kills the taste and the person. A bee that gets glued to the honey through gluttony, turns its source of nourishment into a lethal drug. To enjoy its food without dying in it, the bee must suck no surplus, but take just what is necessary: *tantum quantum* (Sp Ex 23).

*Evangelical poverty is my name for non-addictive gratification of all my senses, interior and exterior, with the wonder that all of God's creation is.*

The aesthetic intensity guaranteed by religious poverty, then, is in inverse proportion to the exertion of my acquisitive powers on the goods of this earth. Little is beautiful; surfeit is hideous. This is even more true of spiritual goods which I crave to store up, ostensibly for eventual disposal in the field of the apostolate, but subconsciously for enriching myself with knowledge that generates power. Ignatius sounds a timely warning: Not a surfeit of knowledge, but only an interior relishing of things satiates our spiritual senses - *non abundantia scientiae satiat animam sed res interne gustare* (Sp Ex 1). Beginning with this warning Ignatius

leads me step by step to the climactic exercise in which he persuades me to live in a permanent mood of relishing God in all things and all things in God (Sp Ex 230 ff).

In this graduated process of spiritual training, Ignatius has intertwined two themes to form one unifying thread weaving all the various exercises into a meaningful whole. The first theme revolves round *evangelical poverty* (both actual and spiritual, i.e., external and internal) as the constitutive core of Christian discipleship; and the other is the perpetual *enjoyment of God* as an inexhaustible source of delight (i.e., source of "consolation") — indeed, a desirable sign and permanent fruit of that discipleship. For, the aesthetics of the Reign of God and the vow of poverty are inseparable if not indistinguishable. They are the foundation of a 'Kingdom-praxis', or to use the more traditional term, an 'apostolic spirituality'

If this is what the principle of non-addiction implies for someone yearning for a gratifying experience of God *in the creatures*, then the second principle, that of critical distance, ensures the converse, namely that all creatures are delectable only in God.

By critical distance, I mean the optimum range of perception that permits the "in-God" perspective to be ever present in our day-to-day encounter with creation. Drawn too near or driven too far, a creature fails in its mission to mediate "tears and consolation" that mark out an authentically *human life* from a merely *hominal existence*. A theology that *coherently* reflects such humanism is not conspicuously present in the main stream of Roman Catholic "orthodoxy."

Our Catholic theological tradition is too often circumscribed by our adulation of that which is said to be *wissenshaftlich*. This is why we have turned works of art into objects of science. Through the microscope of rational precision, we "close in" on the canvas, our eyes roving over the blotches of paints in search of what is allegedly true and genuine. The beautiful escapes us. The followers of Jesus, by contrast, keep a creative distance because their concern is not power that accrues from "an accumulation of knowledge," but the willingness to "relish things interiorly"; for, these things are all a summon from the Creator to receive her outpourings of self-communications (Sp Ex 1). Not greed for knowledge, but love of beauty makes us truly human.

The type of 'cerebral theology' we have inherited from a long tradition of scholastic speculation (now respectably called *wissenschaftlich*), with its obsessive concern for close-range observation and dissection of things, has developed a cult of disproportion (i.e., a cult of the Ugly) in the very understanding of creation which is God's body. We are made to project before us that of which we are an inseparable part. This distancing is responsible for stoicism which is the other side of rationalism.

This is the paradox to be grasped as a theological principle of great value. Stoic indifferentism or distancing is a spirituality that accompanies a rationally "closing up" on things. This is the cult of disproportion we just referred to. A good analogy

would be the present generation's insane compromise with noise. The strategy is to cut the distance between our ear and the source of sound, to the point of reducing our auditory sensitivity to zero. The hi-tech culture entices us to drown ourselves in the din of super-amplified sonic waves that eventually make us deaf to all music! Distancing by closing in; alienation through excessive familiarity.

The figure of the Buddha reclining restfully says it all: a taste of paradise in this vale of tears. Totally at ease with himself and with everything around, he greets us with a compassionate smile that is eloquently instructive: 'I am distant enough to enjoy the world in which you drown yourself to death'. That sums up the aesthetics of the Kingdom.

There is, of course, another, more creative dimension to our sense of Beauty; our partnership with God in producing the final artifact: God's Reign, the New Heaven and the New Earth; our share in the genesis of the cosmic-human-divine continuum called Christ; in short, *evangelical obedience to God's saving will*. Thus the positive creative thrust of the aesthetics of the reign of God is what obedience is about while the passive and appreciative aspect of experiencing the Final Fruit already now is ensured by evangelical poverty. For, as we demonstrated earlier, obedience (our 'ascetical' act of collaborating with God in creation and redemption) and poverty (our 'mystical' absorption into the ecstasies of God's creative and redemptive presence around us) are but two aspects of the same aesthetic experience.

Since our excursus on poverty dwelt long enough on the aesthetic dimension, it would be redundant to go over the same terrain with regard to obedience. Hence I shall focus my attention now on the sense of hope that the Eschaton — the final outcome of our obedience — brings upon us in this vale of tears, or to put it in humanistic terms, that sense of humour which obedience implies as a celebration of beauty which poverty guarantees.

#### 8. Anticipating the Last Laugh: Evangelical Obedience as a Celebration of Hope

"We must obey God rather than human beings" (Acts 5:29).

These defiant words epitomize all that I promised on the day I vowed obedience as a Religious, thus confirming my baptismal consecration. They are the words that the first followers of Jesus hurled at the religious hierarchy of their day. It is none other than Israel's ancient profession of faith which Jesus confirmed on the cross: we have no Sovereign other than Yahweh.

To submit to the will of a man or a woman is the fate of unredeemed beasts. No human being can cringe before another human being without both becoming sub-human. There was once a man who for our sake was made "worm and no man" because some persons degraded themselves by usurping God's place in human affairs. Yet he was not the slave of such men; he was the *Suffering Servant of Yahweh*. It was in obedience to God that he let humans make asses of themselves by riding on his shoulders. God it is whom he obeyed even under the yoke of such asinine people.

Asses do have a role to play in God's world. It was, after all, thanks to his own ass that Balaam learnt of Yahweh's will and obeyed it (Num 22:21-32). The ass, nevertheless, remained an ass, and not God's substitute. And so I have found it difficult to accept any human being as someone "taking the place of Divine Law-giver" and felt rather uncomfortable with the phrase *locum Christi tenens* used exclusively as an epithet for a superior. In the mouth of Jesus, it is the poor and the powerless who were declared to be his proxy, and the first apostles eminently qualified themselves for this by renouncing power and possessions. Those who listened to ("obeyed") them, listened to (obeyed) Christ.

Christopher (Christ-bearer) is a better term and reminds all superiors of the donkey that carried the Messiah on the streets of Jerusalem. In Chesterton's poem, this donkey boasts of the cheers it received from the crowds and the palms they laid before its feet. The donkey would not be a donkey if it knew it was one! It identified itself with Christ who rode on it and appropriated for itself what was due to Christ. As a superior, I can cease to be a donkey the moment I know I am one, and if — unlike Chesterton's donkey — I let Christ receive the deference of the obedient. If, as a superior, I do not have the sense of humour to take myself to be the ass that I am, soon the community will have to exercise *its* sense of humour lest this comedy take on a tragic finale.

Ecclesiastical superiors, in particular, must take pride in their humble vocation. Let them know that the Messiah has no taste for horses and that his preferential option is for donkeys (see Zech 9:9-10). The verdict of sacred history falls heavy on King Solomon who had to build stables in the process of erecting his slave-empire (1 Kings 4:26-28). Whoever could own horses could also own slaves! His idolatry (1 Kings 11:4-8) may explain the emergence of the pyramidal structure among God's People, though he had the wisdom to know that serving (not enslaving) one's brothers and sisters as God's revered icons was true worship rendered to the one and only God.

To restore this ideal of service, the Messiah came as Servant-King, a fool in the world of power, choosing in his wisdom, *to ride on a donkey* (Mt 21:2-6) to symbolize the arrival of God's reign in his person and in his message. But a donkey that thinks itself to be a stallion might strut about in style and toss the Rider down. In the perspective of God's kingdom, it is a privilege, and a grace, to be an ass.

Though not officially appointed a superior, I have, since mid-seventies, assumed leadership in a community made of men and women, young and old, lay and religious, Christian and non-Christian. It took sometime before I acknowledged that this community is, if at all, the one that takes the place of Christ (*locum Christi tenens*) and I am the ass privileged to carry the One whose burden is light, whose yoke is sweet; nevertheless a burden and a yoke.

I am sure many of my superiors would have prayed to God in the words of Moses, "Is it because you do not love me that you *burdened* me with these people?" (Num 11:11). On my part, however, I have always tried to sit lightly on the backs of my superiors. I have learnt that they should not be over-burdened with weights

their conscience cannot carry. Hence in a few crucial matters I took upon my own conscience the responsibility for certain decisions which certain superiors, if approached, would have been too weak to make their own.

Such exercise of charity towards one's superior involves proper discernment, and comes under the category of "prudential judgements"; prudence (from Latin *prudencia*, a contraction of the word *providentia*, implies our judicious entry into God's providential scheme of things by taking courageous steps in the direction of the End towards which all things are ordained. "Prudence" was presumably the nearest equivalent in the vocabulary of Aquinas to what other mystics understood by "discernment."

Besides, Ignatius taught me to practice obedience of *judgement* rather than obedience of execution. This means, in my understanding of this scholastic term, that I am not expected to immolate my will under the axe of my superior's will. We are informed that the authority to rule (*imperium*), according to the then accepted (Thomistic) theology belongs to the realm of the intellect and not of the will. Would I be temerarious if I extend this interpretation also to the Ignatian idea of "judgement" — the scholastics' *judicium*? Superior and the subject must arrive at a common "judgement" (i.e., an understanding) about God's will, so that both may opt for it in unison.

In practice, this ideal is not believed in. To follow the superior's will seems easier than struggling together with the superior to understand God's will. Is not blind obedience a regression to the sub-human? Was it not a disobedient and stiff-necked people that found it more convenient to "slave" (*abad*) under a human ruler than to "serve" (*abad*), i.e., worship Yahweh in the freedom of the desert (Ex 14:12)?

Obedience to Yahweh as the only Sovereign coincides with service to one another; God's reign is a cosmic community of free humans, characterized by the elimination of all despots (Is 14:1-27). For, what Yahweh demands is not sacrifice of victims, but obedience to this law of love (1 Sam 15:22). Those who obey Yahweh alone, would not sell their freedom for religion. They worship unhampered by rites; they live uncrushed by laws; they believe unobsessed by dogmas. They strive to anticipate, as far as possible, the freedom of the End-time. Their obedience, is 'prudential' in the sense explained above; a joyful celebration of hope.

Yet, such people reveal their authenticity only when a nondiscerning ecclesiastical superior dares to "take the place of Christ" and commands without striving to accept his or her role as the Christ-bearing donkey. Faith is not enough in this case; one requires the virtue of hope. One must ever look towards the Ultimate End which is a God who provides. It is a situation when the riders are at the mercy of the donkey.

In such circumstances, that humorous episode in the life of Ignatius can be illuminating. Once, as the leader of my community I advised a confused companion: "Since you sense that very serious issues are at stake and you lack clarity



of vision, I suggest that, as Ignatius did when a muslim blasphemer's life was in his hands, you should let the ass decide!" And so I decided for him!

The Book of Revelation which is a reading of the signs of the time — a time when human rulers had made themselves divinely appointed and infallible decision-makers of the Roman empire (a discomfoting feature that dies slowly)—educates us to look up to God as the God of hosts, the *Pantocrator*. I did not understand the full import of this epithet till I saw an artist's interpretation of it in a church in Rome: Christ with hands raised as those of a Maestro! He is in charge of the cosmic orchestra. He conducts. The flutes may blow flat; the sopranos may sound hoarse, the drummers may break the beat and ruin the rhythm. But the Pantocrator knows to handle it all. And in the end there is harmony, followed by rounds of cheers.

The End-time is a time for laughter, when great errors of judgement will be seen as minor 'diversions'; humour which is an anticipation of this laughter makes obedience a celebration of hope. The cynics are too proud to laugh at themselves; they laugh at others. But the humble can obey because they are the target of their own humour. It is only when I learnt not to take myself too seriously, that I began to celebrate God's providence in what *prima facie* appeared to be myopic decisions of some of my superiors.

### 9. Chastity and Friendship: Interpersonal Communion of the Obedient Poor

That Christmas night in 1955 when I was pronouncing my vow of chastity in the Society of Jesus, I was not aware that my parents had done just that on the solemn occasion of their marriage, over four decades before me. They had vowed to be chaste in their marital intimacy; my vows, too, would lead me to a non-marital intimacy within my celibate chastity.

This conviction dawned on me after I had cleared four misconceptions with regard to the vows. Let me expose these rather widespread errors, listing them in the ascending order of their gravity

The tendency to equate celibacy with chastity is the first source of confusion. In fact, they are two different species, altogether! The former is a *voluntary* renunciation of conjugal and family life, made for the sake of the gospel; the latter, is an *obligatory* attitude of mind and heart. Celibacy is an "evangelical counsel" which practically defines and distinguishes canonically recognized status of the Religious; it is for the few. Chastity, on the contrary, is the "universal" quality of non-idolatrous communion with creatures - something that necessarily accompanies our common baptismal commitment to obedience and poverty. It is for all.

The second misconception accounts for the common belief that chastity and intimacy are incompatible outside the wedlock. This erroneous judgement results from not posing this question within the perspective of biblical humanism (cf. Jer ch. 8 onwards). There, it is idolatry (Jer 8:1-5; 10:1-16) that disrupts anthropo-cosmic euphony (Jer 8:13-22) and disintegrates interhuman communion (Jer 9:4-8).

The implication is that it is our *single-heartedness* (Jer 17:5-8) — by which we covenant ourselves with Yahweh and Yahweh alone (obedience), without any other god to usurp Yahweh's place (poverty) — that guarantees our intimacy with nature and with one another. This singleheartedness is chastity; and as such it is none other than the non-idolatrous character of obedience and poverty; intimacy both cosmic and interpersonal, therefore, is the glowing visibility of chastity. In other words, chastity (celibate or marital) and intimacy are not only compatible, but even inseparable like fire and its glow.

The third in the series of misapprehensions needs a lengthy analysis before it can be got rid of. It consists of a very unwholesome assumption about marital intimacy, against which celibate chastity is contrasted and its meaning distorted.

Some homilists at nuptial masses tend to present marriage as a contract in which partners vow to take each other as the mutual centre of their lives. This is a pseudo-theological concession to an infantile perception of the nuptial alliance, often expressed by affectively immature lovers with such words of endearment as "You are my only love, my only light," "You and you alone are the ultimate purpose of my life, the sole source of my happiness, the absolute centre of my existence," "Minus you I am zero," "The day I lose you, I lose every thing," and so on.

Fortunately, many young people do not take these expressions literally. If they do, they flout their baptismal vows. It is a pity, therefore, if they hear from the pulpit that marital chastity is a way of avoiding adultery by conceding to idolatry.

Yahweh found her people adulterous precisely because they were idolatrous. The first lesson that our vows of obedience and poverty teach us is that no human being — leave alone other creatures — can ever be the absolute centre, the ultimate source of happiness or the exclusive focus of attention of another human being; not even in the holy sacrament of matrimony. No creature can quench another's thirst for love. Only God can.

It is not seldom the case that people who enter marriage worshipping each other as gods end up hating each other as demons. No man or woman can play God to another man or woman. In marital and non-marital intimacy, one relates to the other merely as a sacrament of God, never as a substitute for God. In fact, lovers who face each other too long, will be bored with each other. All true intimacy is between two people arm in arm and facing God together. In the Holy Writ, idolatry and interpersonal communion cancel each other. They cannot co-exist:

This means unchastity is the manifestation of idolatry. The most common forms in which it occurs among the married are *possessiveness, jealousy and suspicion*, to list them in the order of their genesis.

Possessiveness is as much an attack on evangelical obedience (I am your God; I own you) as it is sin against evangelical poverty (you are my God; I cannot do without you). Jealousy which issues from it, is a species of hatred that masquerades

as love. Suspicion, the third step, is a mental hang-up and almost a psychotic disorder. In the Buddha's analysis, *Lobha* or greed (possessiveness), *dosa* or hatred (of which jealousy is a species) and *moha* or mental disorientation (such as suspicion is) are the three roots of spiritual slavery. Their absence is declared to be true freedom (*nirvana*). Chastity is the transparency of that freedom; intimacy is sheer revelling in it.

This is why we maintain that non-idolatrous communion between persons is what chastity is, and that intimacy is included in its definition. It is that quality of friendship which prevents partners from gazing at each other in an exclusive 'short-circuit' relationship. In other words, chastity is the very transparency of obedience and poverty, the baptismal vows which alone generates all forms of communion and all degree of intimacy.

This premised, could we now turn to question of chastity and intimacy among the celibates?

The vow of celibacy is not an option for solitary life. Even the celibate's life is governed by the Creator's ordinance: "It is not good for man or woman to be alone" (Gen 2:18). The individual self that is *unrelated* ceases to be a human person. But human relatedness can never be non-social, non-material or disincarnate. The *humanum* which constitutes God's Centre — Christians call it Christ — is made of us, of cosmic stuff, of matter and energy, tested and refined in the crucible of Jesus' passion and death in which the whole creation is made resurgent. Thus intimacy which is the very essence of God is shaped by this cosmic/human centre. Intimacy, therefore, is co-terminous with our very existence. Celibate or married, we are all called to intimacy of various kinds and degrees.

We learn our first lessons of intimacy in our mother's womb which enfleshes the warmth of the "Father's bosom" (Jn 1:18) where the eternal Word was conceived and nurtured in the Love that was the Spirit. This Word, by the overshadowing of the same Spirit of Love, was made flesh (Jn 1:14), so that all flesh is now endowed with the communicative force of the Word. Intimacy is discourse, or more precisely, intercourse, that is, a psycho-physical exchange of selves through the Word in the Spirit.

This last thought leads us to the fourth and final misconception in our list, the most consequential of them, namely, the tendency to define chastity as sexual purity. Here all the other three misapprehensions are compounded into one, in particular that which equates chastity with celibacy. The result is that intimacy is judged chaste or unchaste in terms of sex. We do not deny that sexuality and even genitality can enter the picture at any time, but chastity and intimacy which are inseparable because they together constitute *the non-idolatrous communion of the obedient poor*, cannot be related *de essentia* with sex. It is celibacy that takes the genital/sexual factor into its definition.

Unchastity is idolatry, basically; not necessarily sexual impurity. Thus encretism (the cult of carnal continence) is as unchaste as pornography (cult of sex).

Since our discourse is about enfleshed intimacy (creation as intended by God does not know any other, as demonstrated above), we can gain much clarity by resorting to the distinction made today between the sexual and the genital. All intimacies are said to be sexual, that is to say, determined by the dominance of the male or female element in our psycho-physical make up. Jesus' friendship with John was sexual. His intimacy with Mary Magdalene was sexual. Joseph's close relationship with Mary was sexual. Mary's maternal love for her divine Son was sexual.

Now, celibate intimacies differ from the marital in that the former are not *per se* genital, while the latter are. However, the non-genital is not equivalent to the platonic. For the sexual and the genital are two aspects of our make-up, which, like two circles that intersect, leave a common area which is at once sexual and genital. In some people, the circle S and circle G touch each other only at the circumference. Such persons know exactly when they cross from one circle to the other.

But most people have an area in which the two circles overlap, and where the sexual is not clearly separable from the genital, as far as human feelings are concerned. Here one is one's own educator and guide. It is through trial and error that one learns to cope with twilight zones in a spirit of inner tranquillity. Chastity is not an anesthesia that benumbs the genital component of our essentially sexual being, but a way of being honest towards the One who is the real Centre of our inter-personal communion. Only a conscience thoroughly formed by the practice of evangelical obedience and poverty is honest enough to learn the exquisite art of friendship.

Or should I put it more bluntly in terms of the humanistic idiom I have employed in analyzing the two kerygmatic vows?

The restlessness that accompanies the almost irresistible desire to express intimacy genitally is handled with consummate dexterity by a celibate who has acquired a taste for that which is truly beautiful and is endowed with just enough humour to celebrate little certitudes amidst unsettling anxiety. If I educate myself in the aesthetics of the Kingdom by adopting the principles of non-addiction and critical distance, and grow in my ability to smile at the ugly in me in the light of that last great laugh of the resurgent cosmos, then I am equipping myself to advance in celibate chastity.

For, neither chastity nor intimacy which is its glow is a static virtue; it is a long journey, a life-long process of growth. The vows are a programme of struggle for full humanity, not an automatic saltus to a super-cosmic state. Thus it is good to take our bearing and check our direction by keeping our communication apparatus (i.e., our conscience) always tuned to the Final Destiny: the *humanum*. If, on the other hand, we glue our selfish eyes on ourselves, or on a co-pilgrim, idolatrously, instead of keeping them fixed on the One that stands in the horizon summoning us, and guiding our journey, we might miss our orientation altogether.

And yet, however much we fix our gaze on the Goal before us, our motion towards it will not and cannot be a straight line. Neither an arrow shot by the most skilled archer nor a technologically accurate launching of a rocket, escapes this law of zig-zag motion. So also in the journey of our vows, we too may now swerve to the right and now to the left, but such deviations are not dangerous as long as we can continuously correct and re-correct our path with the aid of the information ever communicated to us from the One who is the sole source of our life, the Fount of our freedom, the Goal of our Long March: Yahweh, who gathers all of us within Herself as a resurgent cosmos, as a human bundle of ecstatic intimacy for which we already have a name: 'Christ'.

## Priestly Celibacy and Formation to Celibate Life. I-II

Carlos Mercés DE MELO, S.J

The value of the law of priestly celibacy is often enough questioned. Fr DE MELO, Professor emeritus of Moral Theology and Canon Law at the Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth (Pune 411014) makes a study of the historical development of the law of celibacy in the Latin Church (Part I). Then he explains the theological foundations of this practice, uncovering its significance in the fact that the priest is a sacrament of Christ so that the priest's life should be moulded into the pattern of Christ's (Part II). In Part III, next month, he will spell out the demand of an appropriate formation implicit in the law of celibacy.

NOT VERY long ago a priest friend of mine, an accomplished theologian, made the following casual remark in a letter, in connection with priestly celibacy: "Celibacy? Suppress it, and let diocesan priests decide whether they want to marry or not . . . I am inclined to think that this is coming sooner or later."

This friend of mine, is not the only one to think in this way. Other pastors, theologians, as well as members of the laity have expressed similar opinions. Nevertheless, none of the Supreme Pastors of the Church, nor the Second Vatican Council, or any of the Synods of Bishops have ever seriously entertained any such intention with regard to the Latin Rite priests. On the contrary, they have, in no uncertain terms, asserted the relevance of celibacy to priests and priestly ministry, as much at the end of this second millennium of our era as ever before. This, then, is the theme of the present paper: *Priestly Celibacy and Formation to Celibate Life*.

I shall begin by frankly stating my view that when people discuss the problem of celibacy their thoughts and reflections are often very strongly influenced by the experience of the many who have left the priestly ministry in the last two or three decades of this century. This is a fact: in the course of the last thirty years some sixty to a hundred thousand priests throughout the world have left the active priestly ministry. Most of those who left subsequently married.<sup>1</sup> As Pope Paul VI once sadly confessed, this was his "crown of thorns." It seems to me, however, that a sizable number of such are traceable to the lack of proper discernment of vocations, or to a somewhat defective formation to life-long celibacy. This, of course, is not to deny that, even after due discernment and a proper formation, priests may in the long run fail to live up to what they had so solemnly committed themselves to: we are free human beings and are liable to make a right or wrong use of our liberty,

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1. *The Tablet*, 15 August, 1987.

and fall short of an ideal freely embraced for the sake of the Kingdom. This happens in other walks of life — in marriage for instance — and so it does also happen, unhappily, among us, ordained ministers of Jesus Christ and of his Church.

This article will have three parts. After a review of the historical background to our theme, I shall give the theological foundations for the law of priestly celibacy in the Latin Church and wind up by discussing the problem of the formation of our young candidates to the celibate life.

## I. The Historical Background<sup>2</sup>

Priestly celibacy has a chequered history of its own which we must take into account in evaluating what commonly goes by the name of the "law of celibacy."

1. In the *early Church*, after the Apostles, other Christians, men and women, moved by the Spirit, followed Christ's example and consecrated themselves to the service of the Kingdom in holy virginity. The men became itinerant preachers of the Gospel and contributed in no insignificant degree to the spread of the Christian message among their fellow human beings. Some of the girls, too, followed their example in the ministry of the active propagation of the Good News of Jesus Christ to people.<sup>3</sup> Most of these last however, stayed at home, devoting their lives to works of charity, and helping the spread of the faith by their example, prayer, sacrifice.

These virgins, men and women, were held in high esteem and respect in Christian communities everywhere. The great Fathers of the Church looked upon them as, in the words of St Cyprian, "the most distinguished portion of the flock of Christ."<sup>4</sup> All realized, with the great Athanasius, how their very presence was a formidable apologetical argument in favour of the divine origin of Christianity.<sup>5</sup>

Such esteem and appreciation of the virginal life, which was novelty in those times, was far from being just a passing fad that hit the fancy of a few enthusiasts, nor was it limited to but a short period of time or to a few restricted areas of the world. It was rather a "constant" that marked the spread of the Gospel as something characteristic of the Christian message. Nor was it, on the whole, the sign of a negative attitude to sex, marriage, bodily realities as such. No, it was a witness to a very specific, unique love for Christ, and zeal for the establishment of his Kingdom in the hearts of all.

The men among these fervent disciples of Christ were not all of them necessarily priests or candidates to the priesthood. Nor, on the other hand, could priests in those early times be recruited solely from among celibates. But it did happen

2. Carlos M. DE MELO, S. J., "Priestly Celibacy," *Petrus*, 15 Sept. 1989; 15 Oct. 1989.

3. P. Francisco de B. VIZMANOS, S. J., *Las Virgenes Cristianus de la Iglesia Primitiva*, Madrid, VAC, 1949. p. 137.

4. Cf. METHODIUS OF OLYMP, *CONVIVIUM decem virginum*, *orat.* 3, c.8, PG 18, 73.

5. Cf. *Apologia ad Constantinum Imperatorem*, n.23, p.25, 640.

that, in a society which came to value virginity so highly, the priests, pastors and official spiritual guides of the Christian people, began, by and large, to feel the need not to lag behind in the way of love and generosity. And so it came about that gradually candidates to the priesthood came to understand celibacy better, and accept it as a way of life best befitting the priestly state and ministry.<sup>6</sup>

A statement from Duchesne, the well-known historian of the early Church, makes this point clear. He says:

From before the IV century the situation resulting from the spread of consecrated life had already brought about a consequence of unusual importance, the emergence of priestly celibacy. Early enough Christian opinion began to make strict demands in this matter, and the clergy felt that they had to bend to these demands or else lose the hold they had on their faithful. In fact, once it came to be admitted that the state of continence represents a more perfect ideal than the married state, by the very logic of events it came about that the clergy came to be recruited from among the celibates and to opt for celibacy.<sup>7</sup>

It is significant in this respect, that around the year 340, the Council of Gangra, in Turkey, should have felt the need of passing a decree rebuking those among the faithful who boycotted the liturgical services presided over by married priests.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, there was no strict law binding priests to celibacy.

2. It was then in the course of the *fourth century* that, owing largely to the impact made by monastic and eremitical life, the custom began to spread, in the west, of reserving the priestly ordination only to celibates.<sup>9</sup> The first official "law," however, prescribing continence to priests was enacted only around the year 305 — the famous c.33 of the Synod of Elvira, in Spain.<sup>10</sup> Similar decrees were from then on passed by several synods in other parts of the Latin Church: Rome (386), Carthage (390), Orange (441), Arles (524), elsewhere.

Nevertheless, fidelity to celibacy has seldom had a good run in the bimillennial history of the Church. No wonder. For one thing, it is a radical demand, and many were the pastors who fell short of the expectations of the Church and of their flock. The worst times in this regard were from the eighth to the eleventh century: so many were the violations of the law that public opinion came to tolerate the prevailing abuse. For another, there was no proper selection of vocations. Under the feudal regime, then common in Europe, offices and benefices were conferred on wealthy, ambitious lords. These, in turn, presented for ordination ignorant, uncouth vassals of theirs who had no vocation whatever to the priestly office, nor other qualifications befitting that state of life. The result, evidently, was disastrous.

6. C. M. DE MELO, S. J., "Aspecto social de Virgindade Consagrada", *Broteria* LX, Lisbon, June, 1955, p. 622.

7. L. DUCHESNE, *Histoire Ancienne de l'Eglise*, T. I., Paris 1907, p. 53.

8. C. M. DE MELO, S. J., "Virgindade e Matrimonio", *Broteria*, LIX, Lisbon, 1954, p. 400; MANSI, *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio*, II (Paris & Leipzig, 1901), p. 1096.

9. BRUNS, *Canon. Apostol. et Concil.*, Berlin, 1839, V.I, p. 107.

10. MANSI, *Ibid.*, p. 11.



One after another, different Popes tried their best to remedy the evil that was becoming rampant in Europe: Leo IX (1050), Stephen X, Callixtus II, and particularly Gregory VII (Hildebrand). Lateran II, one of the ecumenical councils, passed a decree making Sacred Orders a diriment impediment to marriage (1139).

3. Four centuries later came the *Council of Trent*. Clerical celibacy was again passing through a serious crisis. Large sections of Europe were being cut off from Rome and adhering to the movement of the "Reformation." Those among the German princes who remained faithful to Rome pleaded with the Council Fathers to permit married clergy. This, they maintained, was the only way to remove the scandal of priests living in open defiance of the law of the Church: hardly five out of a hundred, they said, were faithful to their commitment.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, after a careful discussion and examination of the matter, the Fathers of the Council solemnly ratified the existing legislation and took effective measures to ensure its observance. One of these was the establishment of seminaries in every diocese for the training of future priests. A general improvement in ecclesiastical life and discipline was the immediate fruit of the Council.

4. In more recent times the Popes have again and again reaffirmed their determination to uphold the law. During the pontificate of Pope Benedict XV there was again a strong move from the priests of Czechoslovakia urging the Pope to make celibacy optional. All the same, in his allocution to the Consistory on 16 December 1920, the Pope declared unambiguously that the Apostolic See "would never allow any mitigation in the holy and most salutary law of ecclesiastical celibacy, much less its abolition."<sup>12</sup> Subsequent Popes, Pius XI, Pius XII, John XXIII and Paul VI have again repeatedly expressed their convictions and sentiments in the same direction. "It hurts us deeply," said Pope John, "that ... anyone can dream that the Church will deliberately or even suitably renounce what from time immemorial has been, and still remains, one of the purest and noblest glories of her priesthood, the law of ecclesiastical celibacy." And referring to the same subject, his immediate successor, Pope Paul VI, suggested that rather than find fault with the law, "it would be better to promote serious studies in defence of the spiritual meaning and moral value of virginity and celibacy."<sup>13</sup>

5. Summing up his own evaluation of the recent Ordinary World Synod of Bishops, of 1990, of which the theme was precisely the formation of the clergy, the present Holy Father stated that the Synod had confirmed, without the possibility of being misunderstood, the option of celibacy which belongs to the Latin Rite:

This choice which has its origin in a distant past, reveals a deep spiritual and theological insight which locates in the sacramental consecration to ministerial priesthood the source of a gift, a charism freely received and authenticated by the Church: the gift of chastity in celibacy in view

11. *Acta Conc. Trident.*, T. 8, P. 5, p. 622.

12. *Acta Apostolicæ Sedis*, XII, P. 586.

13. PAUL VI, Encl. Letter, *Sacerdotalis coelibatus*, n. 43.

of an exclusive and joyful gift of self by the person of the priest to his ministry of service and to his vocation as witness to God's Kingdom. Is it not significant that in this regard, many Synod Fathers saw the commitment to celibacy as going hand-in-hand with the practice of evangelical counsels? By reaffirming its fidelity to priestly celibacy, and by studying more deeply the reasons for it, the Synod, in the name of the entire Church, has made a great act of faith in the grace given by the Holy Spirit. We know, in fact, that it is the Holy Spirit who guides the Church.<sup>14</sup>

6. *Conclusion:* Priestly celibacy, as we have seen, started early enough in the Church, not through an imposition from above, but by a custom that had its roots in the New Testament and in the Christian experience itself of the early communities. Possibly under the impact made on their lives by the example of those who followed Anthony of the Desert into the eremitical and later the monastic life, and by their own personal meditation of the word of God, Christians realized in a deeper way the full import of the priestly ideal and its ultimate implications. The Church, of course, does not impose celibacy on those who are unwilling, or not prepared to embrace it. What the Church does is to select for the priesthood in the Latin Rite only those who have, and freely accept, the charism of celibacy which God gives them. And she gives them the necessary time to test themselves and make sure that they do have that charism. True, the expression "compulsory celibacy" has come to stay; yet, it is a misnomer.

## II. Theological Foundations of Priestly Celibacy

Several among those who press for celibacy to be left optional also in the Latin Church argue from the supposition that such a law is devoid of sound theological basis. This, it seems to me, is a rather gratuitous assertion. In this section of the present study I propose to expound precisely some of the theological reasons that inspire the law of celibacy that is binding on the aspirants to the priesthood in the Latin Rite.

By way of introduction let me say that experience has shown that not rarely abandoning the priesthood has its roots in the fact that candidates often present themselves for ordination without having a proper personal realization of what priesthood stands for — hence a certain lack of ardour, enthusiasm and zest in the pursuit of the priestly ideal. Others see the priesthood as a sort of quiet, cosy shelter from the challenges and risks that are part and parcel of the secularized world of today. They are mistaken, for in point of fact, the priesthood is a tough, demanding reality calling for something of a heroic spirit in those preparing to embrace it.

Christ's priest today is confronted by a world that by and large has no taste for the supernatural and tends to look at religion and religious values as little more than a relic of the past with no relevance to the present-day generation.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, it is to the people of our times that the priest has to announce the Good News of the Gospel — a "second evangelisation," as Pope John Paul II calls it. This he will

14. Cf. *Osserv. Romano*, 5 Nov. 1990, p.8.

15. Cf. VATICAN II, *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 7.

never be able to do unless he himself has been deeply touched by the same Good News and found in it the main source of his joy and fulfilment in life.

Jesus is no more visible to us today. However, he chooses us, ordained priests, to lend him visibility in the world of today and so collaborate with him in carrying out his universal mission of salvation. We do so by preaching his word preserved in the New Testament, by reconciling people with God in the sacrament of Penance, by making his sacrifice present in the midst of our contemporaries, and nourishing them with his precious Body and Blood, and in different other ways giving them opportunities to experience the Father's indefectible love for them and to respond to that love through their personal childlike surrender to Him. In other words, the priest stands in the midst of his brothers and sisters not just as a functionary, a propagandist, or a businessman, but as "another Christ" — the Christ of the twentieth century. A tremendous privilege, indeed, an awesome responsibility! This is what every candidate to the priesthood has to be deeply convinced of before he makes up his mind to put the hand to the plough.

This is said in passing about the priesthood in general. But what has celibacy to do with sacred orders? we may ask. Well, celibacy is meant to be a liberating force in the priest's life, enabling him to surrender himself without reservation to Christ Priest, our Saviour, in his ongoing work of salvation.

Let us examine this point more closely.

### 1. Sharing in the Priesthood of Christ

Sacred Orders in the Catholic Church are a share in the priesthood of Christ himself. For there is only one priesthood just as there is only one victim and one sacrifice, that of Jesus on the Cross. The priesthood of the ordained minister is no more than a share in Christ's own eternal priesthood: here is our greatness and our nothingness. Given the incarnational economy of the salvation brought to us by the Word made Man, the *raison d'être* of the ordained minister is, as we have said, to lend visibility to Christ the Priest, to make his action and sacrifice present for the men and women of each age, till the end of time (Mk 16:15). The seven sacraments in the Church are actions of the Risen Lord today.

Now Christ was a *celibate* by choice. He was totally devoted to the Father and to the mission entrusted to him by the Father. The Father's will and good pleasure (Jn 8:50), His glory — this was Christ's only business on earth (Lk 2:49). This love for the Father filled the heart of Jesus to the brim and governed his entire life and activity. It also embraced the whole of humankind. His celibacy was therefore not something accidental or marginal, it was an essential part of his personality and mission. Jesus is the true Light that illumines every man and woman who comes into this world (Jn 1:9). So total was this love that we can hardly even for a moment entertain any suggestion that he might have ever given a thought to the project of uniting his life and destiny with that of any particular member of the human race in the total and exclusive manner characteristic of marriage, and thus forming a little family of his own on earth. Jesus is the heavenly

Bridegroom of the entire human race (cf. Jn 3:29; Rev 19:7; 21:2), and his celibacy, as we shall see, is an eloquent testimony of this unique vocation that is his.

Christ, however, is the Saviour of a fallen humanity, estranged from God by sin. His priesthood therefore takes on a *sacrificial modality*. His entire life was in a certain sense, as the "Imitation of Christ" points out, "a cross and martyrdom".<sup>16</sup> Its crowning point was Calvary where he offered himself to the Father and accepted death in expiation of our sins. By his obedience he merited for us God's pardon and grace.

Celibacy is the priest's concrete way of sharing in the sacrificial aspect of Christ's priesthood. Persevering fidelity to virginal consecration does mean in the long run and effective communion in the passion of the divine Master. We have only to think of the generous asceticism of the senses, of the mind and heart, the rigorous dominion over oneself, the habit of self-denial involved in a priest's fidelity to his consecration, together with the love that animates it, the recognition of one's innate weakness and misery, humble supplication, and familiarity with God in prayer.... All this makes of the faithful priest a living victim of love in union with the one whose sacrifice he offers every day for the redemption of the humankind.<sup>17</sup>

## 2. A Mystique of Love

The discipline of chastity borne with faith and love gradually purifies the priest's senses and heart, unifies his entire self around a living Centre, makes his life luminous with a light that is not of earth. It gives a special force and credibility to his preaching and direction of souls. Likewise it suffuses the many hardships he has to endure with a mystical radiance and leads him gradually but steadily to that degree of holiness that, as Pope Pius XII once remarked, is the fruit of constant self-denial animated by love. That is why a perfectly chaste priest is not far from being a saint. At the same time celibacy becomes for the one who is faithful to its austere discipline a path to an increasing freedom and an unfailing source of peace, and inner strength, as we can see in the great priestly figures we come across in the history of the Church or those we may ourselves have known in the course of our life.

Priestly celibacy makes sense in this context of faith, love and grace. It may not be looked upon as just the price the ordained minister has to pay for the privilege of being the spiritual leader of the People of God; it is the priest's irrevocable, if "irrational" determination to endeavour to reproduce in his human life, as best he can, the pattern of Christ's own priestly life and ministry; it is a significant token of his special devotion to Jesus, the divine Lover, whom he is called upon to personify; it is companionship with the Lord in the ongoing work of redemption. Beyond the asceticism that goes with it, it is first and foremost a mystique of love. The truly chaste priest is the one who never ceases to keep his eyes fixed on Jesus.

16. Book II, c. 12. 7.

17. Vatican II, *Presb. Ord.* n. 13; *Codex Jur. Can.*, c. 904.

Having so radically yielded his life to Christ, he has now, as it were, no life of his own: it is Christ who lives in him (cf. Gal 2:20). "A celibate — as the saying goes — is not one who has lost something but one who has found Someone." This is a fact. And so, life lived in celibacy is an unmistakable sign of this preferential love for Jesus. It is inspired and sustained by love, it leads to a continual growth in love, and it looks forward to the ultimate consummation that is to take place in heaven which is life with the Beloved without the danger of ever losing Him: "enter into the joy of your master" (Mt 25:21).

Celibacy, we know, is not an absolute must for the life of detachment and freedom that should distinguish Christian priests. There are holy married priests not only in the Orthodox Church and among Protestant denominations, but also in certain Catholic Oriental rites.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless celibacy lies within the ultimate logic and the dynamic of the New Testament priesthood and admirably befits the priestly ideal.

For one thing, the essential truth of Christianity is that we belong to the Lord and that he will come "soon" to fetch us to himself: "Behold, I am coming soon" (Rev 22:12). The characteristic disposition of any committed follower of Jesus Christ, whatever may be his position in society or his role in the affairs of the world, must be that of a bride in eager expectation, keeping watch, longing for the perfect union with the Beloved, the divine Bridegroom, at His coming — a long Paschal Vigil (cf. 2 Tim 4:8; 1 Thess 4:17). Every Christian pastor proclaims to his flock by virtue of his office this teaching of the Apostle; it is the Latin Rite Catholic priest's cherished privilege to demonstrate what he preaches in a singularly convincing manner by the silent witness of his celibate commitment lived in fidelity, joy and peace. This is what Pope Paul VI insinuates when he writes:

In the community of the faithful committed to his charge, the priest represents Christ. Thus it is most fitting that in all things he should reproduce the image of Christ and in particular follow His example, both in his personal and in his apostolic life.<sup>19</sup>

### 3. Celibacy: A Nuptial Mystery Touching the Core of Christianity

But there is something more. The Catholic Church prizes priestly celibacy so much and shows such reluctance to drop it because — in a way that needs to be correctly explained and understood — priestly celibacy touches the very core of the "Good News" that Jesus brought as the Father's special gift to us. This may appear too sweeping a proposition, yet it is correct; it flows from our baptism.

In baptism we become a *new creation* (2 Cor 5:17). "Henceforth," says St Paul writing to the Colossians, "there cannot be Greek and Jew; circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all" (Col 3:11). A new creation! This means that from mere humans that we are by

18. VATICAN II, *Optatum Totius*, no. 10; *Presb. Ord.*, n. 16:

19. Paul VI, *Enc. Letter, Sacerdotalis caelibatus*, n. 39.

birth we become "divine" through the Holy Spirit whom we receive in baptism. He becomes as it were the soul of our soul and shares with us the eternal life that is His with the Father and the Son; and so makes us truly, not just nominally, "goods" by participation, "sons in the Son", *filii in Filio*. From then on, new values emerge in our life calling us to a corresponding change in our outlook, our attitude to persons, things, events, our very mode of life, in line with the "divine" status to which we have been raised by God, our Father.

To give just one instance, virginity was not held in special honour among the people of the Old Testament. The dream of every Jewish girl was to get married and possibly have a place somewhere in the ancestry of the awaited Messiah. Barrenness was looked upon as a curse. Also divine favour was gauged in terms of earthly goods — plenty of cattle, fields, a rich harvest, children . . . (cf. Jer 31:10-14).

With Jesus Christ a *NEW WORLD* comes into being. Jesus is the God-Man, himself a virgin, the son of a Virgin-Mother. Till then, the most fitting symbol of the union of people with God was marriage. From then on, consecrated virginity becomes a more eloquent and better symbol of the unbreakable link between Christ and his Spouse, the Church. The Church, too, is extolled by the Fathers as a virgin mother, like Mary. And the "Good News" that Jesus proclaims is precisely that we Christians are called to share in this *nuptial mystery*. Begun already here on earth, this divine gift is destined to reach its perfection in the blessed vision of God in heaven, where there is no marriage, because all, the married as well as the celibates, will have entered into marriage union with Jesus Christ, our heavenly Bridegroom an eternal, never-ending wedding feast . . .

To put it in slightly different terms, the mystery of the Incarnation has a cosmic dimension. It concerns not only the individual humanity of Jesus Christ, the Son of Mary, but it takes in, in a certain sense, the whole of humankind. Through the Incarnation, in the Word made Man, God weds the entire human race. In a way that needs to be correctly understood, the Eternal Word "incarnates" himself, so to say, in us all, making of us, through the Holy Spirit, his "extended humanity" (*une humanité de surcroît*) as Blessed Elisabeth of the Trinity says in her widely known *Elevation to the Trinity*. In us he prolongs his life and relives his mysteries, as the masters of the French school of spirituality, de Berulle, Olier, Condren, St John Eudes, loved to proclaim: his birth, his hidden life, his public ministry, death and Resurrection.... Jesus thus becomes the ultimate subject of our actions: he and we become, as the Angelic Doctor taught already in his time, "*una persona mystica*".<sup>20</sup>

The Liturgy of the Church, with the ancient Fathers, speaks of the Incarnation as an *admirable commercium* — a nuptial mystery in which Jesus, the Word Incarnate, woos and weds the human, becoming thereby our heavenly Spouse. All are called to this nuptial union with the Word made Man: it is precisely in this that our "salvation" consists. That is why, writing to the entire community of Corinth, made up largely of married people, St Paul would not hesitate to tell them that he

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20. *De Ver.* 29, 7 ad 11.

felt "a divine jealousy" for them, for he had betrothed them to Christ, to present them to him, he says, as "a pure bride to her one husband" (2 Cor 11:26).

As we see, this is true of every Christian. Yet, this union, as we mentioned above, is realized and best seen in the life of those who freely renounce an earthly marriage union in order to reserve and consecrate themselves totally, and with undivided hearts, to their heavenly Spouse — for His love and service: the Kingdom. Their consecrated virginity thus becomes the sacrament, the visible sign of their total gift of self to God, the one supremely loved, as well as of the vocation to sanctity and divine union which, by God's gracious will, is the purpose of every human being redeemed by Christ. It thus brings out in a striking manner the Father's saving design on humankind, the eschatological import of the Christian faith.

#### 4. The Ecclesial Impact of Priestly Celibacy

A last point before we proceed further: the relation of celibacy to the pastoral work of the priest in the ecclesial community.

As we know, the entire life of the priest is engaged in the service of what we have just recalled: the "new creation" inaugurated by Christ our Lord in His Paschal Mystery. In the carrying out of this service the pastor is, as it were, wedded to his flock. He has no family of his own, no wife, no children to care for, in order that he may be able to attend with an undivided mind and heart, as we said, to the needs of his faithful. They have now become his family; he lives for them; his time, leisure, health, his very person is placed at their disposal unreservedly. Celibacy in the Latin Church witnesses in a palpable way to this complete availability of the pastor to his flock, and guarantees it.

This becomes particularly evident in times of crisis: epidemics, persecutions, etc. He is not then torn asunder between two loyalties: he is a free man, he knows where he now belongs, for life and for death — his flock. The people know the value of celibacy, and while they are more compassionate and understanding today towards those who eventually leave the ministry, they appreciate the difference celibacy makes in the service they receive from their priests.

Married priests would evidently be at a disadvantage in this respect. This is another way of saying that both marriage and priesthood are two "totalitarian" vocations: it is extremely difficult to do full justice to both in a lifetime. We can therefore fully sympathise with that excellent Lutheran pastor, a man happy and contented with his work, who nevertheless confessed that he could appreciate very well the rule of celibacy of the Latin Rite Catholic priests. When he was actively engaged in his pastoral work, he experienced a certain discomfort, he said, with the thought that he might be failing in his duty towards his wife and children; and when he was at home with his dear ones, he felt he could not be totally available to his people: an inescapable tension . . .

Celibacy, besides, has a witnessing value to which people are particularly sensitive today. This is what a well-known layman, the French writer Jean Guitton,

feels about the priest's special role among people — that of witnessing to the Absolute, an indispensable role. He writes:

Unless we are enveloped by the Absolute, we shall never relish what is relative. So then, starved of the Absolute, and unable to find Him anywhere in the pure state, we need to have in our midst a being who, even in his mediocrity and his misery, will incarnate the idea of the Absolute, and will prove to us that He can exist, and is in fact closer to us than we imagine.

This role the priest fulfils in a unique way through his consecrated celibacy. Guitton goes on to stress:

In this aphrodisiac world chastity is for every one a narrow and difficult road to trudge. If the laity are able to lead a life of pre-nuptial chastity and conjugal fidelity without heroic efforts, it is precisely because they see young men living outside the cloister who are strong and virile, bright and radiant with happiness, practising chastity joyously, self-composedly, and guilelessly: our priests. Self-denial on the part of a few elevates and purifies the atmosphere for everyone. Without such beings (though they may be merely human) who manifest in their very bodies their contact with the Absolute, and whose behaviour would be absurd if there were no Absolute, the spiritual level would immediately sink, the flesh would little by little prevail against the spirit; for one is quickly inclined to conclude that the spirit cannot subjugate the flesh, at least without the exceptional aids of a monastery or the religious life. Souls would lose their liberty. Such is my conviction.

And such - he tells us - was also the conviction of a close friend of his, Henry Bergson, "the friend of heroes and saints."

Guitton concludes: "In order to open out to every one it is necessary to be completely at their disposal and detached from everything. That is what priestly chastity implies."

Yes, the priest is in this sense unattached, solitary. This very remoteness brings him closer to every one and makes him universally available. He renounces conjugal love in order to be able to love his brothers and sisters, the poor and downtrodden, with a chaste, virginal, undivided love which is fully human yet divinely human, like that with which Jesus, our High Priest, loved the men and women of his time and of all times. As Sister Elisabeth Bowen tersely says, "To have turned away from every thing to one face (and that is what celibacy is) is to find oneself face to face with every thing."

*(to be concluded)*



## Children's Power: Harbinger of a Better Tomorrow

Archbishop Angelo FERNANDES

Reflecting on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child from a Christian perspective the retired Archbishop of Delhi (Ashok Place, New Delhi 110 001) shows how the child is a teacher of values such as wonder, joy, inner serenity and relationships. The rights of the child must be protected specially through the right family environment.

**T**HE U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, which has been more than four decades in the making, has highlighted the unfortunate plight of millions of the children of the world, raised an new consciousness in their regard and focussed the attention of the nations on amelioration of humanity.

Parents, teachers and all concerned with the training and education of children, teenagers and youth would benefit immensely from a study of the Articles of the Convention and their implications for a better life for the little ones and the families from which they hail.

### The State of the World's Children

Here are a few gruesome facts concerning the world's children. About 100 million children, abandoned by their families, are condemned to a precarious existence in many of the greater cities of the world. They subsist on back-breaking labour or through petty crime, prostitution or begging. Eighty-eight million children, states the International Labour Organization, are at work in unsafe and insanitary conditions, not by choice but by constraint. One hundred and twenty million children between the age of 6 and 11 are denied access to school. Thirty million in the Third World are street children and 10 million live in refugee camps. More than 3 million children die every year of diseases that are preventable and curable. Infant mortality is still rampant.<sup>1</sup>

In graphic terms, every day 7,000 children die of diarrhoeal dehydration; every day 8,000 children die of measles, whooping cough and tetanus; everyday 6,000 children die of pneumonia; every day about 40,000 children under the age of five die in developing countries, largely from preventable causes.

To turn the world into a place truly fit for children, mobilization of private and public support, at all levels, is indispensable. Parents and teachers have a special responsibility to give a lead.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Press Release, *United Nations*, Dept. of Public Information, New York, 26 January 1990.

2. UNICEF Director

## The Dignity of the Child

Humanity is defined by human "needs", whose actualization constitutes authentic happiness, the true goal of life. The key to the correct understanding of and respect for the rights of children is rooted in the unambiguous recognition of their human nature. At the heart of any ethical discussion is concern for *human dignity*. Human dignity is a contradiction in terms if it is restricted to some type of human beings. Wherever there is discrimination against any human being there is no belief in human dignity. And human dignity is antecedent to and the basis for rights and duties.

The very first article of the Preamble to the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* gives recognition to this *inherent dignity* and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. The concept runs through the entire document, explicitly, for instance, in articles 37[c], 39, 40. This emphasis on the "dignity" of children comes through in a striking and new way when children in articles 12 and 14 are treated, perhaps for the first time, as "subjects" and "agents" in all matters affecting the child. This "participation" is new; it is an integral part of the Convention and a great breakthrough indeed. If the concept were to find application in all educational systems it would lead to a revolution in educational practice which is long overdue. It would be the beginning of a new life for children and youth, and a more responsible contribution at their hands to the welfare and happiness of society.

## Faith and Reason Together

The moral values of the New Testament are also found in other religions and philosophies of life. This is seen well by referring to the list of such values in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* to which practically all the nations of the world, whatever their ideologies, subscribed.

Nevertheless, while value systems may agree on a list of important values, they may differ notably in their *hierarchy of values*. Christian reflection on the human values in the *Universal Declaration* will recall certain emphases and meanings in the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

St Paul, a great disciple of Jesus, summarized these Christian priorities as *faith, hope and charity* (cf. Rom 13). He emphasized repeatedly that these primary values take their full meaning from the conviction that the full life of the human person will be achieved only through a personal union with God in eternal life through incorporation in the risen Christ.<sup>3</sup> The goal of human life, as revealed by Christ, is to share in the life of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and to grow in the love, light and joy shared with us for communication to all God's children. This is the prelude and way to the banquet of eternal life. Christians do not claim a monopoly on the true God or his grace, but only that the gracious God had made himself fully, explicitly and intimately known to humanity in Jesus Christ.

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3.. Ashley O'ROURKE, *Health Care Ethics*. The Catholic Health Association of the United States, Saint - Louis, U.S.A., 1982, p. 76.

Humanity, as was said earlier, is defined by human needs. Now, faith, hope and charity work toward the satisfaction of the deepest human need, namely, to live in the society of persons centered in God, the Kingdom of God which Jesus preached, and which he said is for the likes of children.

The final outcome is an intimate and everlasting union in the community of the Trinity. "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee" (St Augustine). In as much as they fulfil the deepest needs of human beings, faith, hope and charity are the ultimate principles of Christian ethics. The Christian understanding of these principles, analogically common to many different ethical systems, interprets them in view of the Christian model of what it is to be human, a model found perfectly realized in Jesus Christ.

What did Christ, the model, have to say about children? What was his attitude in life towards them? What place did they occupy in his scheme of things?

### Jesus Christ and Children

First and foremost, Christ chose to come into the world as a child, an event which the whole world celebrates each Christmas. He made *childlikeness* a requirement of God's Kingdom. When the apostles were trying to prevent children being brought to him for a blessing, he said, "Let the children come to me and do not stop them because the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I assure you that whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it. Then he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on each of them and blessed them." (Lk 10:13-16).

Children were so precious in Christ's eyes that he came down heavily on all who scandalized them. "If any one should cause one of these little ones to lose his faith in me, it would be better for that person to have a large millstone tied around his neck and be drowned in the sea" (Mt 18:6).

Not surprisingly, St Peter exhorts his hearers: "Be like new-born babes, always thirsty for the pure spiritual milk, so by drinking it you may grow up and be saved" (1 Pet 2:1). It is a healthy reminder that childlikeness is an element of spiritual growth: "Be children so far as evil is concerned."

When the disciples came to Jesus asking, "Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?" Jesus called a child, had him stand in front of them and said: "I assure you that unless you *change* and *become* like children you will never enter the Kingdom of heaven. The greatest in the Kingdom of heaven is the one who humbles himself and becomes like this child. And whoever welcomes in my name one such child as this welcomes me" (Mt 19:1-4). God entrusts little ones to our hands and our care. It is in sustaining these little ones and enabling them to become what God wants them to be that we recognize and meet the Christ of God.

The goal of an adult life is to *become* like a child, to acquire the attitudes of a child towards our Father in heaven and to live with sisters and brothers in the same family.

If Jesus began life as a child he was the child also on the cross. Quoting the psalmist, he remonstrated with the Father for having apparently forsaken him and then, at the end, as a child throwing himself into the arms of a parent, he prayed: "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit."

A first conclusion forced upon us all is to learn to *respect the child*. In being respected the child will learn to respect. There lie the first beginnings of a new era in human relations, in home, school and society.

Respecting the child entails its being taken seriously, whoever he or she may be, might think, say or do. Respecting the other means respecting the other as other. It is respecting her and him in their difference, in their being different from oneself, but also different to the image that one had of them.

Learning to view difference in this way constitutes one of the essential teachings of the Gospel; part of the Good News which we so badly need to hear, in the face of the great waves of intolerance sweeping over the world today, often enough sparked by religious fundamentalism and fanaticism. Malraux predicted that the problem at the end of the century would be religious. The staggering scale of the crisis of meaning and values and our computer age prove him right today. The world is not only getting more complex, but also more confusing, especially for children. Respect for the child, therefore, involves helping the child's quest for "meaning" and values. It includes, therefore, the child's right to religious education.

### The Child Teacher of Humanity

What is in a child that appeals to all, that draws and attracts, that teaches and pleads, earnestly - heart to heart - that we do our utmost to ensure that all nations, governments and people ratify the Convention and work relentlessly for its implementation?

The infant child brings God to us. She or he tells us of God in a fresh, simple, astonishing way; in fact, by its very coming into being, man and woman become co-creators of life, and sources of continued life, shepherds of a little household church. The infant child is a medium, a teacher, a revealer of God's presence within the family. There could hardly be a greater boon! It is also true that the family reveals God and, in fact, through loving relationships between persons, reveals the triune God and points the child in the direction of the ultimate goal. But the child is the magnet, the centre and focus.

We therefore need reverently to reflect on, to contemplate children - who they are, what they are trying to communicate and to *listen* to them. They could teach us how to live a life of heaven already now - simple, spiritual, in peace and joy. Adults may be rich intellectually, physically, morally, but they are more complex. Children are better on the spiritual plane, transparent and open to God's healing and transforming love. Unless they have had prejudices instilled into them, they are also trustful and affectively receptive of others.

The language children use to speak, even of the things of God, is devoid of any artificial rhetoric; they speak from life, from love and truth, a language that

springs from the heart.<sup>4</sup> That is why they need and want pictures, stories, fairy tales, lives of saints and sages, comics and other imaginative creations. Like the artist, the poet, the saint, they see things intuitively as by a glance and without the thought processes that tend to blur the look: the gaze of heart to heart! That is why children flock in droves to painting competitions! Moreover, they need such products of imagination and faith also to offset and heal the scars left by images of war and violence and the erotic scenes to which they are exposed in an increasingly vulgar world. What children have to say is amazingly fair, accurate and on target, sometimes to the discomfiture of elders. As the little girl said, when asked by her somewhat alarmed mother, "Is your new friend coloured?" - "I don't know, I did not ask her!" Is that why Mary, the Mother of God, in her many apparitions, e.g., at Lourdes, Fatima and elsewhere, transmitted her message through children and unspoilt teenagers and youth.

If a friend dies, a child suffers deeply, keeps asking herself questions, trying to sort things out. So too, the child knows how to rejoice and be glad, because of the intense presence of God in her heart. This can be refreshingly helpful for parents and elders and lead to an expanded love, peace and joy, and an overall atmosphere of harmony and concord.

It might be good to remember that for children, *friendship* is a better word than love. It is a word they instinctively understand and accept. Children will give anything to have a friend; age is no barrier. There is no generation gap in friendship. Once they are convinced someone is their friend, the door to their hearts is opened. This is true also of the teenager. They want teachers, for instance, first of all to be friends with them, accept them as persons; then they will accept their teaching.<sup>5</sup> Much more so is this true of the retarded, the disabled and handicapped, the orphan and the refugee. The child needs not only to be loved, but to be convinced that he is loved. If the signs are missing, he will conclude the opposite and act accordingly.

### Nuggets of Gold — Four Spiritual Gifts

Pope John Paul II reminds us that "to neglect spiritual values which are a part of the heritage of all peoples would close the door to the total development of the child and condemn him to a *new form of poverty*." The term "spiritual" is a prior and more fundamental term than "religious." It has to do with life-related and universal, innate human capacities which must be fostered and developed. This means providing children at home, in school and in society, with the opportunities, the atmosphere, the climate for these basically beautiful traits to thrive and flourish.

First and foremost comes *wonder*, and moments or occasions for this, whether in the ordinary course of events or through planned activities. Have we not witnessed children's spontaneous and joyful sense of wonder on visiting a beautiful

4. Cf. Godfried DANNEELS, *L'Enfant, Paroles de vie-Noël* Bruxelles, 1988.

5. Cf. Terence O'BRIEN, *Living in Personal Relationship with God*. Guild Publication, 49 Surrey Lane, London, p. 72.

garden or a public park or watching the movements of birds and animals in a zoo, or experiencing the beauty of snow-capped mountains, water-falls and lovely lakes and the moving waters of rivers or the ebb and flow of the sea? Then comes joy, which Chesterton called "the gigantic secret of the Christians." It was the parting gift of Christ to his disciples. "I am telling you all this, so that you may have my joy and your joy may be full." Opportunities for such an experience, ordinary or, on occasion, very profound, are part of a child's birthright. That they are currently denied to millions of our "little prophets" because of their economic conditions is a cogent reason for supporting the Convention.

The same applies to the third spiritual value, *inner serenity*, and the possibility for children to experience, in privacy and quiet, the peace that comes from the Presence of the Lord and His Love in the depths of their being, which their very existence heralds for the world. Children respond very favorably to days of recollection, silence and prayer in places designed to prosper these values. Experience shows that such "spiritual picnics" are welcome by children.

Fourthly, opportunities for *relating to others* are part and parcel of healthy family life and, unless blocked by anti-social behaviour, could develop in a child a great spirit of fellowship with like-minded friends or neighbours, a oneness with the entire human family and a sense of communion with nature and all the wonders of God's creation. Outings together of the family or groups of families, whether to beach or forest or mountain, are thoroughly enjoyed by children.<sup>6</sup>

Is not the building up of such "wholeness" in the lives of children and families part of the peace-making process to which the United Nations is committed? If it happens at the grassroots level, may it not be reflected and/or strengthened in time in the decisions of the highest bodies of a nation and of the United Nations?

The child's repertoire of symbols like colours, flowers, pictures, music and objects suggestive of love, sorrows, prayer, silence, joy, constitute a whole pedagogy which, if taken to heart, could move the present-day culture of aggressiveness and violence towards one of mutual acceptance, towards understanding and appreciation, towards solidarity and harmony in the nuclear and extended family and in the community of nations.

"Children are that precious treasure given to each generation as a challenge to its wisdom and humanity" (John Paul II). Article 3 seems sensitive to the idea since it states that "the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration." And the phrase keeps recurring from time to time.

Mercifully, "the best interests" will be understood to begin with the real needs felt by children and those responsible for them. The first need for improvement is more and better nutrition and health care, an enlightened approach to pre-school children and basic education, safe drinking water and environment sanitation. Expenditure on such basic human needs should not continue to figure in the "Social Welfare" budget of a country, but be considered an investment in development of

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6. Cf. John BRADFORD, *Children Worldwide*, Vol. 16 NO.3, 1989, p.41.

human resources. "Children may be a risky investment," wrote Epstein in connection with the population problem, but "poor villagers seem to see this as the only chance they have to improve their own lot."

It is like a breath of fresh air to read in the Preamble of the Convention that "the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up *in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding.*"

Therein lies the key to "a civilization of love", to a civilization of "being", rather than of "having," the future to which we must advance and which begins in the family. It sounds almost like Christ summing up his whole message in "Love one another"; nay more: "Love one another as I have loved you." And, lest we be in any doubt about his priorities, he said: "*Whoever welcomes in my name one such child welcomes me*" (Mt 18:4). That is why, in an ecstasy of joy, he cried out on another occasion: "I offer you praise, O Lord of heaven and earth, because what you have hidden from the learned and the clever you have revealed to the merest children. Yes, Father, you have graciously willed it so" (Lk 10:21).

The haunting refrain of Christopher Coelho's "Cry of the Child" reveals the depths from which anguished children call to us today:

My cry is for freedom, my tears are for space,  
O give me the space where to grow and to be,  
For all I ask is to look in your face  
And see there a glow of the flame that is me!

### Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion

Respect for the child means, first and foremost, respect for its spiritual dimension, that "inner space" through which the Spirit at work in all unveils to us something of the mystery of God. Echoing the Spirit's presence, the child teaches us the beauty and joy of life as seen through the eyes of the pure, unsullied, transparent image of the divine.

The invitation to faith is universal. A wide measure of acceptance can give a fresh clan to life at all levels. We, and children with us, transmit the mystery of faith. The gift itself from the Creator of children has to be freely and graciously accepted.

What is at stake is the spiritual development of the child as well as its religious freedom. The former has been dealt with extensively; the latter means freedom to be exercised in *belief, behavior and worship.*

Belonging to a particular religious tradition provides a child with a distinctive framework, context and language for his being at one or better attuned to life with God, with himself and with others, to become an ever more harmonized human person.

The four "nuggets of God" of the previous section — wonder, joy, inner serenity and relatedness — doubtless find a place in all the major world religions,

but the emphasis on one or other of them will vary according to their own revelation and doctrines. Religions thus have a spiritually integrative function and will doubtless endorse the *five religious rights* specified in the Articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The first is the right to be *nurtured* in their parents' religious belief (Art 14/2). Second, the freedom to *manifest* or express their belief and regulate their behavior accordingly (Art 14/3). Thirdly, as is provided for adults in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, for children too, recognition is now given to "*freedom, of thought, conscience and religion*" (Art 14/1). Fourthly, *respect* for their religious identity from a three-fold angle — familial, educational and social. The fifth is both negative and positive, and first, protection from religious *discrimination* (Art.2), which is a scar on the face of humankind. Education for *religious tolerance* gets honorable mention and so too *friendship* among all peoples (Art 29/D).

### The Child within the Family

The survival, protection and development of children according to the U. N. Convention on the Rights of the Child becomes imperative and urgent because children in many parts of the world are victims of war, the debt crisis, neglect and disasters of all kinds for none of which they are responsible. Their basic human needs of adequate nutrition and health care, environmental sanitation are still clamoring for attention. They are victims also of family breakdowns, left to fend for themselves on the streets, gutters and dustbins of large cities, or herded into bonded labour camps from which there is no escape. The nightmare of unemployment and underemployment is still the major problem for large numbers of families of the Third World and now, to some extent, growingly also in so-called developed countries. Children are the victims. The right to work is only now beginning to receive pointed attention as in India. Perhaps, a beginning will be made with the family as a practical first step.

Literacy and education bypass more than half of the world's school-age children and, as for pre-school education, the urban and rural poor find current objectives and programmes irrelevant and far from catering to their needs. On top of all these omissions are a host of exploitations — physical and mental abuse and even worse, using children for purposes of pornography, prostitution and other unlawful sexual practices. And how about the gifts of the Spirit, the unfolding of the riches of wonder and joy, peace and trustful love through which the child enriches life and society — how are these to be prospered? Nor may we forget the "freedoms" which a child inherits of thought, conscience and of professing and practicing his or her own religion.

### The Preminent Role of the Family

In most parts of the world the *family* is still the primary unit of society and this is recognized by the Convention. Children's vulnerability and the brutal realities



so many of them have to face makes the family an existential priority. From a practical standpoint it must be recognized that the majority of the children of the world are in the developing countries, largely in Asia, where the family, whether nuclear, joint or extended, is still greatly respected. The difficulties of children stem largely from the fact that far too many families are forced to live in a situation which prevents parents from carrying out their role with dignity. Children become victims of the fallout.

The family is not just a juridical, social and economic unit. It is a communion of love and solidarity which is uniquely suited to teach and transmit cultural, ethical, social, spiritual and religious values essential to the development and well-being of its own members and of society.<sup>7</sup> The education of children is the primary and inalienable right of parents. This must be safeguarded, protected and supported in practical terms if the rights of the child are to receive due recognition.

In and through the family, different generations come together and help one another to grow in human wisdom and to harmonize the rights of individuals with the demands of social life. Not surprisingly, therefore, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states in its Preamble that "the rights of a person, although expressed as the rights of an individual, have a fundamental social dimension which find an innate and vital expression in the family",

The undue focus on the individual, at least in current practice, in school, college, university and in society in general, has tended to produce and transmit a lifestyle of self-centered consumerism, exaggerated possession and waste of the earth's potential. This situation in which children of our one and only spaceship earth are deprived of the basic means of survival and of the opportunity for development, is linked to a vision of life closed in on itself and, thereby, impeding selfgiving and solidarity.

Work for the survival, protection and development of children, therefore, postulates the *education of consciences* towards full appreciation of the value of each and every life, and especially of those who are most defenseless. In the words of the Preamble, "The child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth." Beyond bare survival, children must be offered the possibility of a genuine physical, moral and spiritual development from the beginning of life onwards. In fact, human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. The *selfless love of parents* is the greatest asset for the healthy and happy growth and development of children. Such love has no strings attached. Truly loving parents love their children with no unexpressed conditions like — "provided they behave themselves"; "provided they do as we want them to do"; "provided they do not disgrace us." Parents who have accepted and love their handicapped children know what wonderful persons these children can be. One mother was even able to say: "We do not have a disabled son, we have a son who

7. Preamble, *Charter of the Rights of the Family*, Vatican Polyglot Press 1983. p.6.

8. Terence O'Brien, *op cit*, pp. 70-71.

is disabled." Without such love, the chances of happiness and development for children are reduced to a minimum and they do have the right to be loved, to love, to do good and be happy.

The strong and loving environment of father, mother, brother, sister and relatives, all contribute to the religious and cultural identity of the child. Hence it is not satisfactory to be working for the good of children without being in the frontline of working for the family and its rights and helping all families to make their contribution towards a better society.

Human problems such as those of children will only be resolved by solutions that are *integrally* human. These would include adequate material aid to peoples, families and their children in need, respect for all, notwithstanding the differences, and the fostering of the deeper values of life, beyond material progress. Education towards our *human duties* to family, society and the world is also best done within the family.

The family then has an irreplaceable role to play in the implementation and action envisaged by the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The plan of action to be embarked upon will therefore have to give pride of place to the family, on whose moral stability depends the future of children and of society. It is the family that can best prosper our wealth and hope for a better future — *the children of today*. As a Spanish poet put it: "Don't let us waste the world's gold."

The widest support should therefore be given, from now onwards, to *the 1994 U.N. International Year of the Family*. This extremely important event must be made a success, also in the interests of Children's Survival, Protection and Development. Unless the family, as the natural and fundamental unit of society, comes into its own, there is precious little chance of the Convention on the Rights of the Child receiving the creative attention of nations and peoples around the world.



## The Word of Life

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

### The Master and His Disciples

**A**S ASH WEDNESDAY is late this year we have eight Sundays before the beginning of Lent. I shall comment on the Sundays until Lent and with this the three year cycle of reflections on the Sunday readings will be complete and *The Word of Life* will come to an end. I hope to be able to publish the three year cycle as an independent book.

#### Fourth Sunday (2nd February) Prophet— The Consequences.

Today we suffer a shock. Last week we read that Jesus' general synagogal ministry was greeted with acclaim "being glorified by all" (4:15) and his Nazareth ministry also initially since "all spoke well of him and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth" (4:22). However, the Nazareth Sabbath service ends with conflict as "they rose up and put him out of the city ...." (4:29).

There are problems in our text because we are given no reason for the sudden change of attitude between vv.22 and 23ff nor for Jesus' provocative attack in v.23. Luke probably intends that we see deep scepticism in the words of the people of Nazareth, "Is not this Joseph's son?" There is also the problem caused by the presumed earlier activity in Capernaum to which Jesus refers in v.23 and of which Luke has made no mention. We need to recall that Luke has transferred to this place the scene of scepticism found later in Mt and Mk. There is the final inexplicable end of the narrative: "... he slipped through the crowd and walked away." Luke will not allow us to have recourse to "his divinity" to explain this escape. He could not allow Jesus to be murdered at this point though he wants to indicate at the outset that a violent death will conclude his prophetic ministry.

However, when we become aware of Luke's aim in this opening narrative then we do not become engrossed in "historical" problems but pay attention to the purpose of this composition. We have a summary of Jesus' ministry- its prophetic character is described (4:18-19) with the important "today" (4:21) and two different types of responses, or the shift in response. We shall witness this shift as his prophetic ministry unfolds in his own life time and in the life of the early major disciples ( cf. Peter and Paul in the Acts). The Jewish people rejected Jesus while he was accepted among other people. Luke wishes initially to portray Jesus as an outstanding prophet who suffered rejection like most of the great prophets in the OT.

The First Reading creates a backdrop for this prophetic ministry. The description of the central traits of Jeremiah's prophetic vocation and mission is an appropriate reading (Jer 1:4-5.17-19). Jeremiah was seen as a special prophet ("...before I formed you ..."; "before you came to birth ...") with a universal mission which is characterized by violent opposition ("brace yourself for action" .... "They will fight against you ...") to him and God's word of which he is the messenger: "Stand up and tell them all I command you". As Jesus is empowered by the Spirit so Jeremiah is empowered by God's promise, "I am with you"

The Psalm (Ps 70[71]) has been reread as an appropriate prayer of prophetic figures like Jeremiah. A person suffering socio-religious persecution prays to God. The beautiful prayer is interwoven with earnest appeals for help and confident avowals of trust which is nourished by the experiences of God's help over so many years with memories from the earliest days of life.

We turn to the Gospel. The sceptical "Is not this Joseph's son?" ought to be easy for us to grasp. So often in the recent history of the Church prophetic men and women have met with disbelief, suspicion, accusations and rejections from local communities, dioceses, religious congregations and even the larger Church community! In smaller and yet destructive ways in parishes and groups enthusiastic young people, young priests, lay leaders often meet with the skepticism and cynicism from many people including bishops, priests and religious. The "Is not this Joseph's son?" like the "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" finds expression in cynical or closed attitudes to concerns for justice and the human rights of the poor, dalits, women ..., be they Christians or not, to liturgical renewal, to entrusting more responsibility to the lay people, to social activist movements, to new religious movements .... Such opposition and narrowness ought not surprise us though it ought to pain us and question us about our sceptical attitudes.

In the Gospels Jesus very definitely identifies himself with the great prophetic movements and figures of his religious history. The specific problem in Nazareth is described in terms of privilege, narrowness, selfishness and skepticism. His own people want concrete proofs and equal if not preferential treatment, namely miracles. Jesus quotes the proverb, "Physician heal yourself," and applies it to his own town (the "self") and miracles he has done in Capernaum (the "others"). Luke develops this theme with Jesus' reference to the divine option in the ministry of Elijah and Elisha, namely their 'neglect' of the famine stricken widows and lepers of Israel and their ministry to the "pagans."

In Jesus' ministry his option for "faith which includes justice," his option for the poor and their rights and his critique of wealth, hypocrisy, injustice... lead to violent opposition and his death. This is symbolized at the outset of his ministry as the people take recourse to mob violence.

### **Fifth Sunday (9th February) "Left Everything"**

A major focal point in today's liturgy is the devastating effect at the heart of profound experiences of God and their rich fruitfulness. We have a biblical

paradigm (model) of the elements which enter into the vocation to genuine apostolic involvement in the mission of Jesus Christ. We shall look at the First Reading (Is 6:1-8) and the Gospel (Lk 5:1-11).

Those poignant words of Isaiah, "In what a wretched state I am! I am lost for I am a person of unclean lips and I live among people of unclean lips, and my eyes have looked at the King, the Lord of Armies" (6:5), are echoed again in Simon's cry "Depart from me, Lord; for I am a sinful person" (5:8). This shattering experience of utter unworthiness face to face with the mystery of the Divine is recorded in the writings of and traditions about many sages and saints of diverse religious traditions. We are not concerned here with an awareness of personal sins as such but rather an awareness which rises from the more profound depths of the human person when the light of the divine enables a person to penetrate into such depths. The startling experience of the power, mercy or presence of the Divine uncovers the human heart and leaves the person naked and aware of the unfathomable depths of God and the distance of the human person from God. This includes a pervasive sense of sinfulness and frailty. Many believers have premonitions and glimpses of such transformative experiences in their own life's journey.

Isaiah narrates such an experience which happened within the precincts of the Temple. This determines the way it is described. The description of God is couched in terms of royal majesty with the courtiers' triple acclamation of "Holy, Holy, Holy ...." Isaiah is utterly disarmed and all human pretensions are wiped away and any sense of worthiness is destroyed. He faces the naked truth of himself. By means of the sacred fire God himself purifies and prepares him. Since he is to be a prophet his sinful unworthiness is symbolized by "unclean lips" and their purification indicates his transformation. The prophet is now able to respond to the Divine quest, "Whom shall I send?" with the unconditional and whole hearted yet so profoundly humble "Here am I! Send me."

The same movement is to be found in our Gospel narrative. The setting for the disciples' experience which will define the nature of their mission is described at the beginning. From Simon's boat Jesus *teaches* a crowd gathered upon the shore and eager to hear *the Word of God*.

The following narrative is both dramatic and symbolic with some logical discrepancies because James and John are coupled to the narrative about Simon. The narrative begins with a dialogue. Jesus' instruction to row out into the deep and cast the nets deserved to be treated with scepticism by experienced fishermen. Simon's response highlights aspects which would justify skepticism, namely "we toiled *all* the night" and "took *nothing*" and yet he is ready "at Jesus' word" to play out the nets. The result is described. There are highly significant elements in the story: "a great shoal of fish" (= huge number), "nets breaking" and "filled both boats to sinking point." This catch contrasts so vividly with the previous night's failure.

There follows the climactic dialogue. Peter has experienced divine power mediated through Jesus the Lord, and his cry is really the prayerful cry of the believer after the resurrection. There is an apparent unbridgeable gap between Peter

with his sudden awareness of himself and Jesus. Peter's simple, deep and humble self-awareness enables Jesus to reassure him, "Do not be afraid" and entrust to him a share in his own mission described symbolically as "to catch men." The temple provided the symbolic language for Isaiah to be missioned as a man of God's word, a prophet. Fishing provides the context and symbolic language for Simon's mission. Since God cleanses Isaiah's lips, he can speak God's word. Jesus has enabled Simon's fishing to be astoundingly successful so he will continue to be the invisible source of the fruitfulness of his ministry. Simon will find strength strangely in his humble awareness of being "sinful," namely a person basically inadequate of himself for the ministry of the Kingdom.

The narrative concludes with Simon's (James and John's) commitment to Jesus the Lord. They leave *everything*. This emphasis on "everything" is typical of Luke's understanding of authentic discipleship.

### Sixth Sunday (16th February) Jesus' Distasteful Teaching

We are surprised initially by the First Reading (Jer 17:5-8) and the Psalm (Ps 1) as both come from the wisdom tradition and do not have such obvious links with the Gospel (Lk 6:17.21-26).

These readings introduce us to a pattern used as a means of instruction, namely the blessing and curse pattern. Typical of this pattern is the stark contrast between two opposite categories of people and between the consequences of their way of life. So in Jeremiah and the Psalm we have two opposing categories of people "persons who trust in human strength and values" — the wicked; and persons who trust in the Lord — who delight in the Law of the Lord.

The consequences of these ways of life are described in images: the dry bush in the desert, winnowed chaff and the fruitful evergreen tree by the stream. The wisdom author of Jer 17:5-8 also uses the 'blessing on'/'curse on' formula. The categories themselves are described in obvious religious terms, namely attitudes to God and his Law.

However, in the Gospel the major opposing categories used are socio-economic "poor-hungry-weeping" and "rich-full- laughing" and social ostracism and social acceptance. The consequences are described in symbolic terms. Jesus uses a pattern which describes a stark reversal of situations. In the light of the earlier readings we may be inclined to diminish or disregard the socio-economic situations described by Jesus and the socio-economic classes addressed. The text does not justify the conclusion that the poor, hungry and sorrowful groups addressed are also groups who "delight in the Law of the Lord" or "trust in the Lord." If they do, it is not these characteristics which motivate Jesus' promises.

We turn to the text. The opening verse (6:17) is a simple yet solemn introduction for Jesus' instruction on the plain (6:20-49). The verses (6:18-19) which summarizes a highly successful ministry of healing ("power came forth from him and healed them all") are omitted.

The blessings (6:20-23) and curses (2:24-26) are addressed solemnly to his disciples ("He lifted up his eyes"). The fourth blessing and curse ("blessed are you when people hate you .... Woe to you, when all people speak well of you ....") obviously reflect the persecution and excommunication of the early believers whose experiences are compared to the experiences of past prophets.

The other blessings and curses are very close to Jesus' own words. We note the "now" in two blessings and curses. I think the meaning of these verses is illustrated in the story of the rich man and Lazarus (16:19-31), while the curses alone are illustrated in the story of the rich fool (12:13-21). Jesus' option and message of hope (present and future) is made concrete in his ministry itself and its summary in response to John's doubting disciples (7:18-23). The use of contrasting pairs poor-rich, hungry-full ... is typical of Jesus' teaching especially in Luke (the two men who went to pray; the two sons; the Pharisee and sinful woman .... In each case there is a reversal of the situation). Such teaching indicates both Jesus' options and also the mystery of his teaching. The beatitudes-curses are clear and pointed calls to conversion and a proclamation of hope.

While the economically poor and hungry will often remain poor and hungry, they will in their deep sufferings hear Jesus' words in ways that the well-fed and secure are not able to fathom. These promises to the poor are a judgement on the rich and a challenge to them to take realistic steps to change the sinful mechanisms which create and support human oppression. The curses remind us of God's attitude to irresponsibility.

Pastors are obliged to reflect how their communities and individual believers or groups can be believing communities (persons) who ensure that the blessings of Jesus become actual realities for groups within their neighbourhood. There is also the obligation on the Christian community to support her "prophets" who "are hated, excluded, reviled ... on account of the Son of man." They attempt to be authentic disciples of the Jesus who spoke these beatitudes and lived them himself and therefore was killed. Today's alleluia verse provides us with content for prayer: "Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for revealing the mysteries of the Kingdom to 'mere children'. "We ask that we may be children, open to Jesus' teaching. It is hard indeed for us, the older we become, to listen to the true Gospel

#### Seventh Sunday (23rd February) No Limits

Apart from the frightening idealism of Jesus' teaching (Lk 6:29-38) there are two surprises in our liturgy. David is placed before us as a model for imitation and an example of behaviour exemplifying Jesus teaching (1 Sam 26:2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23). However much the writers of Samuel and 1 Kings whitewash David, he was a cross between an adventurous mercenary and audacious dacoit prior to his becoming king and a treacherous intriguing and wildly king who ensured that his son and successor, Solomon, settled outstanding scores with his enemies. The story of the nobility of David and his religious sensibilities which prevented him

murdering his enemy, King Saul, hardly justifies proposing him as one who loved his enemies.

The Psalm (102[103]) provides a rich background in its depiction of God as "compassion and love" who "crowns our lives with love and compassion." The psalmist enumerates the ways God's mercy and compassion are experienced by the sinner, the sick and the dying (102: 3-4). He indicates the extraordinary fact that his loving kindness overflows and our sins and guilt do not provoke him except to merciful compassion. This is a deeply moving psalm. However the picture of God revealed by Jesus goes beyond the God of the psalmist. There is an utter stupidity in God's goodness to all whatever be their attitude, and a mercy which knows no limits.

The Gospel really leaves us either speechless or searching for ways to discredit or dilute Jesus' teaching. There is no room for manoeuvre and the examples he uses indicate that, whatever situations we bring forward, Jesus' answer is always the same - let the manner in which the Father acts be the sole criterion for your attitude and behaviour.

Luke begins with a pregnant phrase to describe the audience: "to you who listen." This is another way to describe anyone who claims to be or is keen to be a disciple. The first part of the reading is constructed around the contrast between types of people and the surprising behaviour demanded of the disciple (6:27-30). We just give a list: enemy/love; hate/ do good; curse/ bless; abuse/pray; strike.../offer the other cheek; take your kurtā/do not withhold your banian; beg/give; take/do not ask back. The first conclusion is so universal and disarming: "As you wish people would do to you, do to them."

Such astounding behaviour is justified by various arguments (6:32-36). If our behaviour does not go beyond normal social expectations and experiences then how is the disciple of Jesus a genuine disciple? Jesus uses as a term of contrast with disciple "sinner," a socio-religious category contrasted with the righteous, religious person. Mutual loving, doing good, lending ... make no demands and are part of normal social life. The second reason for love of the enemies ... lending and "expecting nothing in return" is the reward motive. A more profound motive is the fact that such behaviour reflects God's own ways and so makes a person worthy to be, and not only be called, a son of the Most High. God is gracious (the word could be used to summarize the terms used earlier 'love', 'do good', 'bless') to the ungrateful (people who borrow and do not return even a 'thank you') and to the evil (enemy, those who take, hit...). The final motive is the attempt by the disciple in all his/her behaviour when provoked, deceived, oppressed ... to mirror the Father's merciful compassion.

The last verses (6:37-38) are explanations of the proverb, "For the measure you give will be the measure you get back" (from God, is here understood). Instances are enumerated on how to/not to judge, condemn, forgive and give.

The final image used by Jesus illustrates the basic attitude Jesus expects us to have to others. We have all seen shopkeepers measuring out flour, grain, salt when



a measure and not weights is used. "Good measure" means to 'press down' to 'shake together', letting the flour/grain 'overflow'. Not only is all cheating and meanness excluded but also the hands that smooth off the top. Our love, our responses to requests, our generosity, forgiveness, acceptance of others ... is to be limitless. We could use a variation of the prayer for generosity today:

Lord, teach me/us to be generous  
 To serve others as you have,  
 To give and not count the cost,  
 To toil and not to seek for rest,  
 To labour and not to seek for reward  
 To love and not to heed the wounds,  
 Except that of knowing that we are merciful as the Father.

#### Eighth Sunday (March 1st) "Our Words"

I did not understand the choice of the wisdom reading from Sirach (Sir 27:4-7) until I reached the last clause of the Gospel: "... words flow out of what fills the heart" (6:45). The first reading is a fine example of popular instruction by the "wise person." The single criterion to evaluate the quality of a person is their speech. Using a fascinating series of images as comparisons, popular wisdom assesses the character of a person. Our own experience enables us to judge the accuracy of popular wisdom.

The Psalm (91 [92]) is a mixture of praise of God and praise for the just person in the fashion of wisdom writings. The just person is understood in our context as the person whose speech justifies giving him/her this honourable title.

The teaching of Jesus in the Gospel (Lk 6:39-45) shares many of the characteristics of wisdom instructions. There are a series of proverbs distilling human experience and coming to conclusions. I am able to see a link between the proverb about the blind leading the blind and the splinter and plank. The disciple-teacher saying is less easily integrated into the ideas of the passage. Wisdom tells us that self-criticism and self-correction are much more difficult and more rare commodities than the readiness to criticize and correct others. However, the plank-splinter saying justifies Jesus who brands us hypocrites when we criticize others. Having removed the plank we would not see any need to remove other people's splinters!

The common proverbs about good/bad trees and figs/thorn bushes are used to illustrate the good person/bad person sayings. Again we nod in agreement for we know from our own and other people's lives that a sullied, bitter and unforgiving heart spreads evil within families, offices, work-places, groups and communities. Finally, we return to our daily conversation, a mirror of our hearts.

As we look back over these three Sundays and listen to Jesus we see, mirrored in his words, his own heart and we remain in silent wonder before "the good man who out of the treasure of his heart produces good."

## Second Readings (1 Cor 12:13-13:13 and ch. 15)

Paul gives us the ultimate remedy which prevents both plurality and diversity and also uniformity and conformity from corrupting and destroying genuine unit in diversity.

In 13:8-11 we clearly see that the gifts of tongues, prophecy and knowledge were creating conflicts and problems. Paul affirms their temporary and limited value and therefore devalues them also in the face of tendencies to absolutize them. The only permanent and absolute values before God are faith, hope and love of which the primacy belongs to love. He affirms the primacy of love by evaluating these gifts and other outstanding gifts and heroic virtues in relationship to the presence or absence of love (13:1-3). Without love everything, however precious in itself, is empty in God's eyes.

What is love? Many authors have remarked that the description of love (13:4-8a) is also a picture of Jesus Christ. We note that negative descriptions dominate in the attempted description: "love is not ...". There is a danger in the description because love seems to be a passive and docile way of living. I suggest that we also consider other aspects of love. Love demands honesty, uncovers sham and hypocrisy, pursues truth, confronts selfishness, suffers at injustice, resists evil, pursues justice, human equality, dignity and freedom .... Let us pray for the Church today-local and universal, parishes, groups and families that "love be the aim" (14:1) of all, whatever be their role.

The selections from 1 Cor 15 provide the opportunity to reflect on an aspect of our belief in the Risen Lord and our future resurrection. In the first text 1 Cor 15:1-11 the centrality of Jesus' resurrection and the earliest experiences of the risen Christ stands out clearly. Paul gives us one of the earliest summaries of the core of our faith in a very schematic way: a. Christ died for our sins; b. according to Scriptures; c. he was buried; a'. he was raised b'. according to Scriptures; c'. he appeared to Cephas.... (15:3-5). The event which is highlighted is the appearance of Jesus culminating in Paul's transforming experience. This creed is the core of our Christian life. Paul says, "So we preach and so you believed"(15:11).

However, members of the community have denied the future resurrection of the Christian dead (15:12). In the second text (15:12,16-21) Paul makes an important point. Our faith that Jesus has been raised implies that we also shall be raised. The denial of our resurrection implies a denial of Jesus' resurrection. The consequences of such a denial are quite drastic - "your faith is futile, you are still in your sins, the dead have just disappeared for ever and we who hope in Christ are utter fools." However Paul asserts that Christ has risen and is the source of meaning and hope for us. The intimate relationship between Jesus Christ and the believer is central to his thought.

Paul makes various attempts to explain the "how" of the resurrection (15:35-54). One of these is chosen (15:45-54) where he uses the Adam (first human person) and Christ (last Adam) comparison which he had used earlier

(15:21-22; cf. Rom 5:12-20). Comparing and contrasting Adam and Christ he argues that as we have and do share in the qualities of Adam (living being, physical being made from dust) so we shall share the qualities of Christ (life giving spirit, spiritual being and man of heaven). He develops the ideas of "man of dust and death" and "man of heaven and life." The explanation is not so convincing except that the basic insight that we all do and shall participate in the life of Christ and are gifted with the Spirit of life.

The final text (15:54-58) is a grateful cry because death is swallowed up and its power destroyed by Jesus Christ. There are two profound insights in Paul's conclusion. He sees the ultimate enemy before whom we are utterly powerless as **death** (total death) which is a universal power. Death exercises its power over us by means of **sin**, another universal enemy before whom every religion (in the text the reference is to the Law) is powerless to help us. Normally religion feeds the power of sin (communalism today!). In Romans he develops these ideas at length (7:7-8:17). The second basic insight is the belief that God the Father through Jesus Christ ("who died for our sins and was raised on the third day") has freed us from **sin and death** and given us the Spirit and life (15:57). An appropriate and intelligible catechesis on the resurrection today does require careful thought and clarity of expression. May Jesus Christ who is the life-giving Spirit be our hope today.

# Book Reviews

## Scripture

**The Humanity of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel.** By Marianne Meye THOMPSON. Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1988. Pp. viii-168. \$ 11.95. ISBN 0-8006-2075-5.

I read this study while teaching John and one issue which was continually raised by the students was the apparent disregard for Jesus as an authentic human person and his disinterest in normal material human needs (thirst [ch. 4], sickness [ch. 5], hunger [ch. 6], sight [ch. 9] and death [ch. 11]). Jesus appears as God walking on earth who is interested in Living Water [ch. 4], Eternal Life-Judgement [ch. 5], Bread of Eternal Life [ch. 6], Believing-sight [ch. 9] and Resurrection and Eternal Life [ch. 11].

This study investigates "the meaning of John 1:14 and the humanity of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel" (p.11) in dialogue with studies like Kaesemann's *A Study of The Gospel of John in the Light of Chapter 17* (sub-title). For Kaesemann John's christology is "naively docetic" and "we saw his glory" (1:14b) is of far greater importance than "he became flesh" (1:14).

Thompson initially critiques Kaesemann's almost exclusive attention to ch. 17, his rigid description of the human in terms of humane and the lack of a holistic approach. She clarifies her own goal by excluding 1 John, any study of Gnosticism, the problems of veracity related to the

question, of the historical Jesus and John and later dogmatic formulations.

She investigates Jesus' humanity, and the problems caused by the obvious emphasis on his divine origin and actions under four headings: 1. The (human) Origins of Jesus [birth, parents, homeland, Galilee]; 2. Incarnation and Flesh [sarx]; 3. Signs, Seeing and Faith; and 4. The Death of Jesus. The Epilogue is entitled "The Humanity in the Perspective of the Fourth Gospel."

Apart from Kaesemann, the other main interlocutors are Bultmann and Schottroff (Louise). Though these are the thinkers with whom the author basically dialogues and disagrees yet many educated Christians would have ideas similar to these authors about the neglect, if not irrelevance, of the humanity of Jesus in John. Therefore the study is relevant.

Thompson is a good exegete since she approaches John holistically, paying careful attention to the actual text and not possible pre-texts, and allows texts to clarify each other. She also correctly holds that the Gospel is written for believers and so presupposes a wider Christian formation than is explicit in the text.

One major aspect of her study is her willingness to accept and ability to indicate the ambiguities in John, who does not answer all the objections to the scandal of the double reality of Jesus: Word and flesh; signs which reveal the

reality of Jesus for the believer but are opaque and obstacles for the unbelievers; and the origin of Jesus which neither explains the full reality of Jesus nor is ultimately an obstacle for the believer. "The secret of Jesus's origin belongs to the secret of his person which unbelief does not grasp."

The study of individual texts in each chapter is enlightening, based upon recognized authorities and personally argued. The study of *sarx* is well done and the two descents as true light (1:9-13) and as flesh (1:14-18) and the insistence on the secondary character of the Eucharist in 6:51-58 are well argued. She rightly insists on the importance of materiality in the sign pericopes, the relationship of sign to believing and the correct way to understand the texts critical of signs.

There is tension in John where the whole reality of Jesus is Word and flesh, a human person who is also the source of Life, the revelation of God and yet part of our history. John emphasizes both aspects in different ways at different times for different purposes and does not resolve the tension. To see and believe and not to see and believe are both part of John. Jesus is both of and not of the world.

This is a fine study which will help readers to appreciate this Gospel more deeply and see the humanity of Jesus as authentic and yet not the whole of the Jesus' reality.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

**The Epistle To The Hebrews.** By F. F. BRUCE. (revised edition), Grand Rapids, W. Eerdmans, 1990. Pp. xxii-426. \$ 27.95. ISBN 0-8028-2316-5.

Fr Celsus Spicq, O.P., somewhere in his own magisterial work on Hebrews remarks that it constitutes an event in the history of the religious thought of the world. Anyone who has read the Epistle with even just a bit more than a cursory attention will, I think, assent to that statement. The author of Hebrews is without any doubt one of the greatest theologians to whom the Catholic Church has given birth. He is such because the fountain of his theology is the faith of the Church that he pondered in his pastor's heart. Our times tend to separate the pastor from the theologian - a sad lack of insight. It is not surprising then that the late Prof. Bruce should have written such a deep commentary, for his heart too was that of a pastor.

Bruce was invited by the first editor of the NICNT series, which this volume continues, to undertake a book on Hebrews in 1954. He worked for ten years and published his commentary in 1964. Twenty-five years later he gave us this revised edition. I am not going to compare the two editions in this review, but shall limit myself to the present volume. Bruce himself tells us: "In these twenty five years my general understanding of this epistle has not changed in any material respect, but I have profited from my further study of it and still more from the publications of a number of colleagues which have appeared since the first edition was issued" (xiii). Special among the latter is Fr Albert Vanhoye, S.J., who is one of the foremost Catholic students of Hebrews.

Bruce's approach follows the historico-critical method counterpointed

by and seasoned with a deep Christian devotion. He begins with a statement of the "Argument" of the epistle. This is followed by an "Introduction" which takes up the usual questions of the people addressed, the destination, authorship, date and canonicity. In this section he also studies Hebrews and the OT and the Gospels. Then comes the actual exposition and finally several indices. The structure of the expository sections is as follows: he begins with a thematic title, then gives his own translation, and finally a verse by verse commentary. Strictly textual questions are confined to the footnotes. The amount and quality of his scholarship is prodigious. If I had to choose one commentary on Hebrews in English, this would be my choice.

For those who may be interested in using it for their own reading, I add here Bruce's divisions of the text and the themes he assigns to them: 1:1-2:18: The Finality of Christianity; 3:1-4:13: The True Home of the People of God; 4:14-6:20: The High Priesthood of Christ; 7:1-28: The Order of Melchizedek; 8:1-10:18: Covenant, Sanctuary and Sacrifice; 10:19-12:29: Call to Worship, Faith and Perseverance; 13:1-21: Concluding Exhortation and Prayer; 13:22-25: Postscript.

Those who want to refurbish a blurred priesthood (and those who have no problems of priestly identity) will profit much by what is here. I also think that the theology of religions has much to learn from Hebrews and its author. Since we all share in the priesthood of Christ, this is a book for all conscientious Christians. For

... only attachment to the unchanging and onward-moving Christ could carry them forward and enable them to face a new order with confidence and power. So in a day when everything that can be shaken is being shaken before our eyes and even beneath our feet, let us in our turn give thanks for the unshakable kingdom which we have inherited, which endures forever when everything else to which men and women may pin their hopes disappears and leaves not a wrack behind (392).

Roman LEWICKI, S.J.

### Ethics and Morals

*Moral Theology Today: Trends and Issues.* Edited by Bosco PUTHUR. Alwaye, Pontifical Institute Publications, 1991. Pp.xxii-284. Rs.150.

This book is a welcome addition, as the subtitle itself indicates, to the trends and issues of contemporary moral thinking. This collection of eighteen essays examines certain trends and elaborates on main issues of moral theology.

It is divided into three parts. Part one deals with the sources and norms of Christian morality. Trends and issues in Moral Theology, especially in the Indian context, are examined in the second part. In the third part two authors jointly review the work *Love of Neighbour in Mahatma Gandhi* of Dr Joseph Thekinedath to whose memory the present work is dedicated.

As a commemorative volume, it contains a useful collection of academic essays in the field of moral theology and Christian ethics. As a col-

lection of various essays, this work gives a taste of everything moral that comes under the subject of "Moral Theology." Among the various themes treated the following could be identified as having special significance: (1) Development of Moral Theology; (2) The Specific Character of New Testament Morality; (3) The Fundamental Option and the Changing Horizon of the Moral Reflections; (4) Formation of Conscience as the 'axis' of one's moral life; (5) Political Praxis and Ethical Reflections; (6) Violence in the Indian Context; (7) Ecological Ethics.

The various topics treated in these eighteen essays, of course, do not exhaust the vast area of what we call moral theology. All the same, these reflections on the contemporary concerns of major moral issues deepen our knowledge and shed new insights into our understanding itself. Though some of the topics treated are not so new to the field of moral theology and moral reflection, like abortion, problem of evil, suicide, Homosexuality, in vitro-fertilization etc., yet they are treated with keen perception. They do give pastoral and psychological insights. In conclusion, I found this book interesting and informative.

John CHATHANATT, S.J.

**Justice and the Intifada.** Palestinians and Israelis Speak Out. By Kathy BERGEN, David NEUHAUS, Ghasan RUBEIZ. Geneva, WCC Publications, 1991. Pp 159. \$ 12.95. ISBN 2-8254-1028-4.

It takes a lot of courage and creative energy, unflinching hope and op-

timism to enter into a conflict-ridden situation to bring the warring parties to negotiate for peace and reconciliation. The task becomes very difficult when ethnic groups are fighting for sovereignty, territory etc., or when religious groups are fighting for places of worship. In such situations the warring parties would have already manipulated religious or regional sentiments among the masses making the issue emotional and explosive, fabricated fictitious history in support of the one-sided claims, absolutised their positions, making no room for the particular and the relative, and created stereotypes of their opponents, demonising them. Meanwhile the whole issue would have been totally clouded and confused, and both sides claiming for the garb of justice and truth for all they say and demand.

We are witnessing such happenings in India with regard to Kashmir, Punjab, the Mandir-Masjid claims in Ayodhya. There are similar cases all over the world. Here the power-brokers who spearhead the conflicts leave no room for an alternative. In such situations the way for real peace based on justice cannot be found in the "earthquakes" or the "volcanic eruptions" or the "whirlwinds" produced by the violent extremists, but only in the still soft voices of the common people who really face the consequences of the conflicts. The present day media, in its hunger for sensationalism, focuses only on the dramatic and the blood curling rhetoric of the fanatics, ignoring the sober, rational and practical but gentle voices of the masses. Therefore

it becomes an important task to listen and record these unheard voices in order to make any significant headway in the peace initiatives.

This is what Kathy Bergen, David Neuhaus and Ghassan Rubeiz have done in their book *Justice and the Intifada*, analyzing the present Israel-Palestine conflict. Their book assumes historic importance and relevance as it has come during the first Arab-Israel peace talks in Madrid.

The Zionist slogan coined in 1897 said, "A land without people for a people without land" (p. 138), did not take into consideration the Palestinians who were living there from time immemorial. In 1917 the British issued the Balfour Declaration promising "the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jews" (p. 154). Thus the Europeans started the process of washing their hands of the responsibility of dealing with the dominant presence of the Jews in Europe and exporting the problem to West Asia. From then onward clashes between the Palestinians and the Israelis began to occur frequently. In 1948 the British divided Palestine and created the State of Israel. As the diaspora Jews began to pour in from all corners of the world the Palestinians were progressively driven from their homeland to make place for the arriving Jews and thus making the Palestinians a diaspora, a scattered people. In the 1967 war Israel occupied the Gaza Strip and the West Bank and began to put up settlements for migrating Jews. As a result the Palestinians suffered great human rights' violations. With enormous U.S. military aid and financial backing Israel continued to

flout the U.N. resolution No.242 that called upon Israel to withdraw its armed forces from the occupied territories. Recently the USSR has allowed the Russian Jews to leave for Israel. This accelerated the process of building settlements in the annexed lands, making things impossible for the already harrowed Palestinians.

It is in this context that in 1987 the Palestinians started their liberation struggle, *INTIFADA* in Arabic. The present book under review is about how the *Intifada* is closely linked with true justice which is essential for real peace in West Asia.

The authors have interviewed all types of people for writing this book, Palestinians and Israelis, young and old, men and women, secular activists and religious clergy, and liberals and hard-liners. The interviews are neatly arranged in four chapters. The first chapter has recorded the voices of those at the front line, the second the views of the activists, the third the words of women, and the fourth the opinions of the clergy - Islamic, Jewish and Christian.

Though unexpressed, there is a hermeneutic principle running throughout the book, that those who suffer from injustice will long for and appreciate the value of justice more than those who are responsible for such sufferings (p. 120). This becomes very evident when we go through the interviews given by the Palestinians. Generally they are sober, practical, humane and creative, wanting to reach a workable solution for peace based on justice. But it does not need much effort to recognize the intolerance, arrogance



and absolutising tendencies of the Israelis. For instance, Benny, an Israeli soldier in the front line, casually says, "I have never seen even a glimmer of justice in their demand for a state....this is the most counterfeit claim they could make" (p. 45). When asked what he would do if an independent Palestinian state is established as the result of the *Intifada*, he emphatically answered, "It will never be established, .... This is like an egg that you have made into an omelette - you cannot make it into an egg again" (p. 40). Later on we read the interview of Dr Yisrael Eldad, one of the grand old men of Israel right wing (pp. 129-136). He belonged to the pre-1948 ultra fanatic underground militia who fought the British. The present Israeli Premier Yitshaq Shamir was his colleague in those days (p. 134). He does not recognize any right of the Palestinians for self determination. He would rather advise them to go and join any one of the existing 22 Arab countries (p. 133). His words are full of ridicule and sarcasm for the Arabs.

But this book also brings out beautifully the fact that all the Israelis are not fanatic and heartless. Reading the interview of David Hammo (pp. 75-81) we are informed about the internal contradictions in the Israeli society. The majority of the Jews (55%) are "Oriental Jews," Jews from Asia and Africa, who have lived for centuries with the Muslims under Islamic Rule. As such they have a humane and understanding spirit toward the Arabs. But unfortunately, these Oriental Jews form the proletariat of Israel, being relegated to the periphery of the Israeli life. The political leadership of Israel is

in the hands of the European Jewish elite, who are called "Ashkenazi Jews." Their character and ideology seem to be strongly influenced by what is called the "extermination complex" (p. 80). Hence their approach toward the Arabs is brutal and full of suspicion. They seem to be responsible for re-creating the horrible Holocaust for the Palestinians.

Among the peace-activists we find people like Rami Hasson (pp. 55-63), an Israeli soldier who has refused to use the guns against unarmed stone-pelting Palestinians. For this crime he has already been punished five times with prison sentences and other political harassments. From him we learn that there are similar conscientious objectors running into hundreds in the Israeli army, though only 130 have so far been punished (p. 55).

Before closing, we should mention that most of the religious voices recorded in this book (pp. 120-153) are very sensitive to the sufferings of the Palestinians as well as the Israelis. In spite of the differences in religion and denominations, there seems to be a healthy atmosphere for ecumenism and dialogue. These clergy have a good deal to tell us about theologising in the midst of unjust suffering. For instance, Fr George Makhoul, a Greek Orthodox priest, has made this theological reflection on the rocks which the Palestinians throw. "When I see these children throwing rocks, I remember David and Goliath; I remember that Jesus himself was the corner stone that was rejected by the builders; I remember that he told the disciples, 'If these children fall silent, then the stones themselves will cry out'. Now we see

that the time has come when God has indeed made the stones speak." (p. 127).

The book is very useful to inform readers as well as to strengthen the peace process in West Asia. It also can inspire similar attempts in other war-torn, violence-filled places.

P. AROCKIADOSS, S.J.

## Art

**Doors of Perception. Icons and Their Spiritual Significance.** By John BAGGLEY with an Appendix by Richard TEMPLE, New York, St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1988. Pp xii-160. \$12.95. ISBN 0-88141-071-3.

A book written from a realization is sure to have an impact on the one who reads it. This is such a book. Fr Baggley, the author, is an Anglican parish priest, who obviously has a deep life in the Spirit. In English and in one volume I would vote this book as probably the best introduction to icons that we have at present. It covers the whole reality of the icon. After some historical background and biblical foundations, the author exposes the spirituality of icon painters and goes on to elucidate the "language" that they use in their art and the whole "environment" of the icon. Almost half the book consists of illustrations in color of icons and commentaries upon each icon.

As one reads and looks, one sees that what icons are about is what is at the heart of the message of Christ. Mr Temple in his Appendix on "The Painting of Icons" says well: "Tenth century theologians stated that icon painting

was an actual *spiritualisation of matter*, a re-enactment of the Incarnation, reflecting actually and not only symbolically the appearance of God at the human and earthly level .... The great icon painters were spiritual masters who achieved a psychical state of inner unity, combining in themselves both divine and earthly energies whose actions gave access to comprehensive and whole truth. Any gesture, any physical undertaking, when carried out in the light of this special state, would be bound to communicate itself to vegetable and mineral material substances whose qualities and vibrations would inevitably be harmonized by the influence of a man imbued with divine energies. To paint an icon is to bring about a transformation of matter that is only real as a result of a transformation in the inner being of the painter" (99-100). Mothers, fathers, teachers, pastors, spiritual directors, social workers-everyone! - are they not painters of icons?

I think this book is for anyone who wants to make the incarnation *real* in his or her life.

Roman LEWICKI S.J.

## Biography

**Nicholas Point S. J. His Life and Northwest Indian Chronicles.** By Cornelius M. BUCKLEY, S.J. Chicago, Loyola University Press, 1989. Pp. xii-520. Np. ISBN 0-8249-0598-4

The story that this book tells carries a true word of encouragement for gifted and sincere people who may find themselves often misunderstood. Nicholas Point was a Frenchman who

grew up in Napoleonic times, joined the Jesuits at the age of 27 and went to the USA as a missionary in 1835. He served as Rector and Principal of a college (St Charles in Grand Coteau, Louisiana) and as a pastor of more than one flock. He was also a pioneer in the mission to the Blackfeet Indians, one of the most fierce tribes that lived in the northwestern plains of North America.

The book falls into five parts: a biographical introduction (1-243), thirteen letters of Point (245-342), and roughly six excursions that he made (343-392), some assorted anecdotes (393-404) and a conclusion (405-439).

The deepest desire of Nicholas Point's heart was to work among the Indians of North America. His happiest moments and days were spent among them. This very sensitive, artistic man (he painted and sketched much of the Indian life), felt most at home when he was by himself roaming the plains with the Indians on their sprint and winter hunts. From them he received a love and an understanding that was not always shown by his brethren. He had as his superiors the great Blackrobe, De Smet and De Vos - men quite different from him in temperament. He did not find it easy to get on with them - and they did not find him easy to fathom. He was a very obedient Jesuit, but scruples added to his sufferings. He had the good fortune of having his brother Pierre as Superior of the Jesuit mission in Canada. Fr General Roothaan was good enough to let him finish his last years under his brother.

What struck me most about him was that he loved the Indians, including the Blackfeet, with the depths of his

being. His mind became Indian. He thought in their categories and this enabled him to effect some seemingly miraculous reconciliations between tribes that used only to war against one another. He had some elementary medical knowledge and the Indians considered him a great healer - a quality that enhanced his influence with them. It is rather obvious from what he wrote and the way he wrote, that Point felt a very *personal affection* for the Indians (that remains today as well the only effective mediation of God's love).

Fr Buckley is a rather formidable historian! His biographical introduction and conclusion include, it seemed to me, almost every person and event that had any connection with Nicholas Point. Perhaps there is too much detail here to keep the main character in clear focus. But I hasten to add that all those details are interesting and fascinating - even the Madura Mission and Mother Philippine Duchesne, RSCJ appcar. One gets more than Point, one gets quite a lot of 19th Century Jesuit mission history. Workers in the tribal sections of our own land will find much of interest in this book. For the misunderstood missionary here is consolation and inspiration.

Loyola Press deserves our thanks for publishing the book. The index is excellent and facilitates in case one does not want to read the whole history.

Roman LEWICKI, S.J.

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## Christian Priesthood in India Today: A Biblical Reflection

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Professor of Scripture and Theology at the Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth (Pune 411014), the author studies first the OT priesthood in its two trends, "sacral" (cult-centred) and "historical" (mission-oriented), and its evolution from a "natural" to a specialised organisation, from concern with oracle, instruction and cult to cult alone. Then he describes the rather rare NT category as applied a non-cultic Jesus, whose only altar is the cross and to the Christian community that makes Christ present. The various forms of specialised ministries found in the NT are not described in priestly terms, but stress the ideas of overseeing and service. Against this background, the sacralising and clericalising development of the Catholic priesthood needs reinterpretation in the line of the Vatican II stresses on ministerial service, not only to the Christian but to the whole human community, after the pattern of Jesus who was at the service of God's Kingdom.

THE WORD 'priest' comes from the secular Greek word *presbyteros* ('elder', 'city father') which describes a person of some age, experience or importance in a social group. But it has everywhere come to stand for the special kind of religious intermediary, more correctly designated by the Latin *sacerdos* or the Greek *hieros* both of which signify a person who is "sacred" (*sacer* in Latin, *hieros* in Greek), that is, who has been "filled with divine power" and/or "consecrated to the deity" and so "belongs to the divine sphere."<sup>1</sup> As such the 'priest' (at least in the Near Eastern and Hellenistic cultures in which the biblical tradition is rooted) performs a specific religious role. He or she<sup>2</sup> is an official mediator, exercising a stable mediation between the divine and the human worlds. This mediation is both ascending (humankind to God) and descending (God to humankind): for the priest both (1) communicates God's will to humankind through oracle and instruction

1. Gottlob SCHRENK, art. "hieros" in TDNT vol. III, 222. Though "priest" is etymologically related to *presbyteros* or elder, its semantic content is determined by the greek *hieros* or "sacred minister."

2. Since the bulk of this paper discuss an all male priesthood (Jewish or Christian), I have evaded the troublesome task of using inclusive language, except for this one archetypal instance which will make clear, I hope, that I do not regard priesthood as a male monopoly.

(and so exercises the descending mediation of the word); and (2) organizes the human response to this communication by officiating at sacrifice and prayer (and so exercises the ascending mediation of worship).<sup>3</sup>

All this the priest does in a stable, institutionalized way. Other religious intermediaries, like the prophet or the shaman, act as mediators only when "possessed" by sudden, arbitrary and transient irruptions of the power of God (the 'spirit'). But the priest exercises his or her mediation in a continuous way as the function of a stable office. As Max Weber puts it:

... the personal call is the decisive element distinguishing the prophet from the priest. The latter lays claim to authority by virtue of his service in a sacred tradition, while the prophet's claim is based on personal revelation and charisma. It is no accident that almost no prophets have emerged from the priestly class. . . . The priest, in clear contrast, dispenses salvation in virtue of his office. Even in cases in which personal charisma may be involved, it is the hierarchical office that confers legitimate authority upon the priest as a member of a corporate enterprise of salvation.<sup>4</sup>

As an official mediator, the priest maintains a continuous and regular communion with the deity. He is able to do this in virtue of some innate quality or power (mana) which he possesses which makes him a sacral person. The priest possesses this either as a natural endowment or as an acquired gift; either because he is the leader of a human group (the father of a family, the chief of a tribe, the king of a people); or because he is the member of a priestly class into which he has been inducted by one of several possible ways: election by the community, appointment by legitimate authority, or birth into a hereditary priestly clan. 'Natural priests', whose sacred character derives from the leadership they exercise in human groups (father, chief, king), predominate in early, less structured societies. In more developed societies where social differentiation and stratification are more pronounced, these are increasingly replaced by 'professional priests',

3. William OXTONEY, art. "Priesthood: An Overview", in Mircea ELLADE (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religions*, vol. II (Macmillan: 1987) 528-34, locates the "core" meaning of the priest, in the Western use of the term, in two factors: the priest performs a sacrificial ritual at a fixed location and does so on behalf of a community (528). The role of the priest is thus seen as exclusively cultic. As our survey of the Old Testament priesthood will show this exclusively cultic understanding of the priesthood is the result of a growing specialization in the practice of the priestly function, not unlike the specialization that we see in the medical profession today! It would seem to be arbitrary to identify the "core" of the priesthood with the end point of this process. Rather it is stable mediation as such, both cultic and revelatory, which, it seems to me, constitutes the core of priesthood.

4. Max WEBER, *The Sociology of Religion* (London: Methuen, 1966) 46-7. So also Joachim WACH, *Sociology of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 360: "The authority of the priest depends upon the charisma of his office. The calling, not the call, characterizes the priest, though of course such call may be, supposedly or actually, the beginning of the priestly life in individual cases."

that is, religious specialists who belong to specialized priestly castes or guilds, hereditary or otherwise.<sup>5</sup>

Although the concrete expressions of priestly existence differ very greatly from religion to religion, from place to place, and from age to age, this basic understanding of the priest as an official mediator (natural or professional) between the human and the divine worlds is found in most if not all the religious traditions of humankind, certainly in the world from which the Hebrew Bible emerged. It underlies (as we shall see) the understanding of priesthood in the Hebrew Bible. But it is strikingly absent in the early Christian community, which, in its New Testament, presents us with a radically new understanding of 'priesthood'. It is this new understanding, obviously, which must determine the shape of the Christian priesthood in India today. But the priesthood of the New Testament is best understood when seen against the background of the Old Testament which serves both as an illuminating context for and a foil to the New. This paper, then, will (I) survey briefly the history of the priesthood in Israel, (II) attempt to spell out the New Testament understanding of priesthood, and then (III) reflect on the significance of this for our understanding of the role of the priest in India today.

### I. Priesthood in Israel

Unlike Hebrew prophecy which is distinctive to Israel and has no really close equivalents in neighbouring cultures, Israelite priesthood has been largely borrowed from the priestly institutions of neighbouring people in the ancient Near East.<sup>6</sup> The origins of this priesthood are lost in obscurity. Ex 32:25-29, with its concluding declaration by Moses ("Today you have ordained yourselves for the service of the Yhwh, each one at the cost of a son or a brother, and so have brought a blessing on yourselves this day"), might

5. Cf. Alfred BERTHOLET, art. "Priesthood", in *The Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* Vol XI (NY: Macmillan, 1948) 388-95; Pierre GRELOT, *Le ministère de la nouvelle alliance* (Paris: Cerf, 1967) 21-25.

6. Walther EICHRODT, *Theology of the Old Testament*, Volume I (London: SCM, 1961) 392. The distinction which Eichrodt makes between the charismatic and institutional leaders of Israel (between the prophecy on the one hand and priesthood and kingship on the other), taking one to be specific to the Israelites and the other borrowed from neighbouring peoples, is not, of course, to be pressed too hard. There are antecedents of and parallels to Hebrew prophecy in the ancient Near East - cf. the excellent survey of relevant material in H. B. HUFFMON, art. "Prophecy in the ancient Near East, in *IDB Sup.* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976) 697-700 and the opposition of prophecy to law and cult is much less clear-cut than was formerly supposed - cf. Gene M. TUCKER, "Prophecy and the Prophetic Literature" in Douglas A. KNIGHT and Gene M. TUCKER (eds.), *The Hebrew Bible and its modern Interpreters* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989) 325-68. But it is difficult to find in the literature that has come down to us anything outside Israel which is truly equivalent either to the dominant role that prophecy played in Israelite religion or to the sharp eschatological and ethical pointedness of their message. Prophecy in Israel, while not wholly isolated and unique, is certainly special and more specific to its particular religiosity than priesthood or kingship.

suggest that the levitical priesthood originated with Moses. But the text in its present form is certainly a later addition, made at a time when the right of the levites to the priestly office was in dispute and a historical justification was deemed necessary.<sup>7</sup> Instead of a static, fully formed priestly organization, going back to the time of Moses, the biblical evidence suggests, rather, a confused evolution, in which a plurality of originally independent, and sometimes even non-Israelite, priestly clans gradually merged into a single monolithic 'levitical' priesthood.<sup>8</sup> This long and complex process of evolution can be conveniently divided into three periods which correspond to the three great divisions of Israel's history. We shall survey the development of the priesthood in Israel in (1) the Pre-Monarchical Period (from the Conquest to David), in (2) the Monarchical Period (from David to the Exile); and in (3) the Post-Exilic Period (from the Exile to Jesus). The survey avoids any reference to the Pre-Conquest phase of Israel's history, because the tenuous biblical traditions about the Patriarchal and Mosaic periods when critically analysed tell us almost nothing about the kind of priesthood then existing.

### 1. The Pre-Monarchical Period (the Conquest to David)

During the period of the Judges, cultic functions were not restricted to the members of any particular class, but were freely performed by natural priests. Samson's father, Manoah (Judg 13:19), and Samuel's father, Elkanah (1 Sam 1:3-4), offer animal sacrifices; Gideon, a tribal chieftain, initiates a cult at Ophrah (Judg 8:27); the people of Kireath Jearim "consecrate" (*gidd<sup>e</sup>su*) Eleazar and his sons to look after the ark (1 Sam 7:1).<sup>9</sup>

At the same time, groups of *professional priests* belonging to hereditary priestly families, ministered at the various sanctuaries (often of pre-Israelite origin) situated in territories belonging to the confederated tribes - at Shiloh (1 Sam 1:3); at Gilgal (Josh 4:20); at Dan (Judg 18:29-30); at Beersheba (1 Sam 8:1-2) and at Bethel (Judg 20:26; 1 Sam 10:3).<sup>10</sup> Originally these sanctuary priests would have belonged to different priestly clans, some of them possibly pre-dating the arrival of the Israelites,<sup>11</sup> but the intriguing story of

7. Martin NOTH, *Exodus* (London: SCM Press, 1962) 250; Brevard CHILDS, *Exodus: A Commentary* (London: SCM, 1974) 561; 570-71.

8. See Aelred CODY, *A History of the Old Testament Priesthood* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969), and more briefly Gottlob SCHRENK, art. "hieruus", in *TDNT III* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965) 260-63, for a survey of the history of the Israelite priesthood.

9. Cf. CODY (see n. above), 81: "Eleazar is not called a priest in this passage, but there is no mistaking the fact that he is a priest. His priesthood is implied in the use of the verb *gidesh* for the act of establishing him in his function (cf. Ex 28:3, 41; 29: 1,33, 44; 30:30; 40:13; and Lev 8:12,30), and we catch one of the last clear glimpses in the Old Testament of the primitive rural priest, the solitary attendant of a local sanctuary."

10. Cf. Georg FOHRER, *History of Israelite Religion* (London: SPCK, 1973) 111-13.

11. *Ibid.*, 114-15.

Judg 17, in which a certain Micah, an Ephraimite, employs a wandering levite to be the priest of his house-shrine in place of his son who has served the shrine till then, shows us how the gradual 'levitization' of the priesthood must have taken place. 'Levites' (whatever their origin<sup>12</sup>) came to be acknowledged as the preferred and eventually the sole practitioners of the priestly craft; and non-levitical priestly personnel, were, no doubt, assimilated into the new priestly class - much as pre-Aryan cult personnel were absorbed into brahmanism during the Sanskritization of southern India.<sup>13</sup>

The professional priesthood of the sanctuaries was occupied primarily with the giving of oracles (soon to develop into full-fledged religious instruction), and with the custody of the sacred objects of the people (1 Sam 3:3; 3:19-21). Sacrifices were offered at the sanctuaries (1 Sam 2:13), but not necessarily by the priests. As a rule it was the father of the family or the head of a clan (a 'natural priest') who offered sacrifices at this time (Judg 6:25-27; 13:19; 1 Sam 1:3-4), while the professional priests of the sanctuary where the sacrifice was made would claim a portion of the sacrifice for themselves (1 Sam 2:12-14). What Cody says of the priesthood of Shiloh summarizes well the function of the professional priests all over premonarchical Israel: "The priesthood . . . was a priesthood of sanctuary attendants, whose oracular consultation was perhaps developed into judicial *tora* or beginning to develop into that kind of *tora*. They had no monopoly on sacrifice . . ." <sup>14</sup> The professional priesthood of the premonarchical period was primarily a priesthood of the word.

## 2. The Monarchical Period (David to the Exile)

Natural priesthood is now invested in the king. As Yhwh's representative before Israel (Ps 2:7) and of Israel's before Yhwh (1 Kings 8:14), the king exercises a sacral kingship and performs priestly functions, though these are

12. The origin of the Levites is a much disputed question. The biblical identification of the levites with the secular tribe of Levi, which, as a blessing (Ex 32:25-29; 33:8-11) or as a punishment (Gen 49:5-7), got no share of the land at the Conquest, but were assigned priestly service among the people, has been widely questioned: cf. EICHRODT (n.6 above) 392-95; CODY (see n.8 above) 55-60; Roland DE VAUX, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (London: Darton Longman & Todd, 1961) 358-71; A.H. GUNNEWEG, *Leviten und Priester* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965). They have been identified with priestly clans at Kadesh who joined Moses during his stay there after the Exodus and supported him in his conflict against ancient Hebrew priesthoods (Eichrodt); with members of the tribe of Levi who failing to take possession of the land at the Conquest lived as *gerim* among the settled tribes and specialized in cult (Cody, de Vaux); or as cult specialists from various tribes, other than the tribe of Levi (which never existed) who for some reason had lost their tribal membership and become *gerim*, and now took to religion to eke out a living (Gunneweg).

13. Cf. D.D. KOSAMBI, *The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India in Historical Outline* (Delhi: Vikas, 1970) 168.

14. CODY (n.8 above) 72.



not identical with those of the professional priests.<sup>15</sup> So David, vested in priestly vestments (a linen 'ephod'), dances a sacred dance before the Ark as it is solemnly carried into Jerusalem (2 Sam 6:14-15); Jeroboam installs a priesthood, institutes a feast, and offers sacrifices at the royal sanctuary he has constructed at Bethel to counter the influence of the rival royal sanctuary at Jerusalem (1 Kings 12:28-30); Solomon offers a sacrifice at Gibeon (1 Kings 3:4), and at Jerusalem for the dedication of the Temple (1 Kings 8:1-5), at the three great feasts of the year (1 Kings 9:25); Ahaz offers the first sacrifices on the altar he has had constructed on the model of the one he had seen in Damascus (2 Kings 16:10-13). As de Vaux remarks, while some of these texts could mean that the king 'had sacrifice offered', not all are to be taken in this way, and some like 2 Kings 16:12 positively exclude such a meaning.<sup>16</sup> Even if not a priest "in the strict sense" (that is a professional priest), the king in Israel was "a sacred person with a special relationship to Yhwh" and "in solemn circumstances he could act as the religious head of the people."<sup>17</sup> He was, that is, a, indeed *the*, natural priest of his people. The biblical description of this royal priesthood reaches its peak in the enthronement psalm, Ps 110, in which Israel's victorious king (later identified as the eschatological Messiah) is proclaimed "a priest for ever in the order of Melchizedek" (Ps 110:4).

The professional priesthood too now attains a greater measure of unity and uniformity. In Jerusalem, a mysterious Zadok, who may have been the Jebusite priest of pre-Davidic Jerusalem retained by David as his official priest along with the old Israelite priest Abiathar in order to conciliate the conquered people (2 Sam 15:24-29; 20:25), takes charge of the temple cult after the expulsion of Abiathar by Solomon (1 Kings 2:26-27), and is later provided with legitimating genealogies which link him up with Aaron (6:50-53) and Levi (1 Chron 6:1-8).<sup>18</sup>

The rural sanctuaries, with their now fully levitical priests, continue to flourish. But with the unification of the cult under Josiah (622 BCE), when the sanctuaries are suppressed and the Temple in Jerusalem becomes the sole legitimate place of worship, the Zadokite priests of Jerusalem become a superior clergy (priests proper, claiming descent from Aaron), while the priests of the rural shrines are reduced to the status of "assistant priests" or levites (1 Chron 6:48-49).

15. CODY (n.8 above), 100-102, distinguishes between the Assyrian *sangu* charged with the administration of a temple, and the Israelite *kohen* who was essentially the attendant of a sanctuary. The king in Israel was never identified with a *kohen*. His priestly function was that of the *sangu*. I do not find this a completely satisfactory distinction. The king in Israel is more than an administrator of the cult. He plays an active role in exercising it on behalf of his people. The distinction between priest and king is that the priest embodies the 'professional priesthood' (still largely a priesthood of the word), the later the 'natural priesthood' (which is exclusively a priesthood of worship).

16. DE VAUX (see n. 12 above), 113-14.

17. *Ibid.*, 114.

18. CODY (n.8 above), 88-93; DE VAUX (n.12 above) 372-74.

The chief priest of the Jerusalem Temple now becomes increasingly important. He is known as the priest (*hakkohen*) in 1 Kings 4:2; 2 Kings 12:7; Jer 29:25; the 'chief priest' (*hakkohen harosh*) in 2 Kings 25:28; the 'high priest' (*hakkohen haggadol*) in 2 Kings 12:10; 22:4. With the disappearance of the monarchy after the Exile he becomes the supreme religious representative of the people. He alone has the right to enter the Holy of Holies (access to which is forbidden under pain of death to any other man) once a year, on the day of atonement.<sup>19</sup>

The functions of the priesthood during the monarchy are indicated in Deut 33:8-10, which is part of the blessing supposedly given to the twelve tribes of Israel by Moses just before his death. Although the text probably originated as a legitimizing text, to defend the claim to full priestly status that the rural levitical clergy were making against the exclusive pretensions of the Zadokites after the centralization of the cult at Jerusalem, it does give us an accurate picture about what the priests of the time were supposed to do.

And of Levi he said:  
Give to Levi your Thummim,  
and your Urim to your loyal one  
whom you tested at Massah,  
with whom you contended at the waters of Meribah;  
They teach Jacob your ordinances,  
and Israel your law;  
they place incense before you,  
and whole burnt offerings on your altar.

We find here three functions entrusted to the priest. The priest of the monarchical period would (1) give oracles using the *urim* and *thummim*, two unidentified objects, possibly marked stones, which served as lots through which an answer (God's answer) could be given to specific questions, carefully formulated so as to allow only a yes/no reply (Num 27:21; 1 Sam 14:41-45); (2) impart religious instruction (Jer 18:18; Mal 26); and (3) offer sacrifice.

Of these, the giving of oracles (that is the proclamation of God's will on specific issues) was taken over by the prophets, and ceased altogether after the Exile. The offering of sacrifice was a privilege which the priests shared with the king. But the study and the imparting of the *tora* remained a specifically priestly task all through the monarchy. Israelite priesthood under the monarchy was thus a priesthood of both ascending and descending mediation. The priest exercised the ministry of worship and of word.

### 3. The Post-Exilic Period (the Exile to Jesus)

The Exile to Babylon in 587 BC spelled the end of the monarchy and so of the natural priesthood of which it had become the sole expression. The sacrifice which had been shared by priest and king became the prerogative of

19. Joachim JEREMIAS, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1969) 149.

the priest alone. At the same time religious instruction which during the monarchy had been the principal function of priests was taken over by a class of lay theologians, the scribes. By the New Testament times the Jewish priesthood had become a cultic priesthood concerned only with the offering of sacrifice.

At the time of Jesus the Jewish priesthood was a large, rigidly stratified priestly class claiming descent from Aaron,<sup>20</sup> and engaged in an immensely elaborate sacrificial liturgy. At its head stood the High Priest, now no longer a Zadokite (for the Zadokite succession had been broken in the Hellenistic period when the Seleucids, the Hasmoneans and then the Romans began to appoint as High Priests politically suitable candidates of their choice), but still "the supreme leader in a now primarily religious community."<sup>21</sup> Under him were ranged a few hundred chief priests (the members of the aristocratic high priestly families), about eight thousand priests, and some ten thousand levites (roughly twenty thousand cultic people in all),<sup>22</sup> a vast, highly organized contingent of hereditary cult personnel, rigidly stratified (like the *varṇa* in ancient India) according to purity lines based on a 'holiness' defined by their proximity to the Temple and their participation in its cult.<sup>23</sup>

#### 4. The Priesthood of the People

This sacralization of the priesthood led, Cody suggests, to "a theological development in which the holiness of priests (sacral, ritual holiness rather than ethical or moral holiness) is accentuated in contrast to the relatively reduced holiness of the rest of the community."<sup>24</sup> Because such holiness was determined by proximity to the Temple and the part played in the cult, it was possessed supremely by the High Priest (who alone could enter the Holy of Holies), and in descending degrees by the priests, levites and the people. But there is in the Hebrew Bible a parallel tradition of a non-cultic holiness, communicated in virtue of the covenant to the whole people of Israel, through which 'Israel becomes "a

20. DE VAUX (n. 12 above) 394 notes: "From Solomon to the Exile the descendants of Sadoq provided the priesthood of the first Temple, and in Ezechiel, the priests are always called 'sons of Sadoq' (40:46; 43:17; 44:15; 48:11). Yet in the priestly documents of the Pentateuch (Lev 3:13; 6:14; 7:10), in Chronicles (1 Chron 6:3; 24:1), and in some post-exile Psalms (Ps 115:10-12; 118:3; 135:19), they are called 'sons of Aaron'." There are innumerable explanations offered for this change on which see CODY (n. 8 above) 156-74. The simplest explanation would seem to be that the post-exilic priestly class is a result of what CODY calls the Zadokite-Levite compromise, and consisted of Zadokite returned from Exile, who admitted into their ranks the Levites left behind in Judea who had made it as priests, and formed a priesthood claiming origin from Aaron and Levi.

21. CODY (n. 8 above), 177.

22. JEREMIAS (n. 19 above), 198-207.

23. Bruce J. MALINA, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology* (London: SCM, 1981), 131-34.

24. CODY (n. 8 above), 191.

kingdom of priests," invested with a priesthood which is not cultic, but so to say salvation-historical, that is, tied up not with worship but with mission.

Significantly, the earliest reference to this priesthood of the people (Ex 19:5-6) appears at the beginning the biblical narrative of the sealing of the covenant at Sinai (Ex 19:1-24:18). The Sinai theophany is prefaced by a solemn message given by Yhwh to Moses for the people of Israel, in which Yhwh spells out the special relationship he has to his people (their "election"), and the mission that this implies:

Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant,  
You shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples.  
Indeed, the whole earth is mine,  
but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation.  
These are the words that you shall speak to the Israelites (Ex 19:5-6).

Yhwh spells out his relationship to his covenant people in three expressions. They are to be his "prized possession from among all the nations" (*segulla mikkol ha'amimim*);<sup>25</sup> a "kingdom of priests" (*mamleket kohanim*); and a "holy nation" (*goy gadosh*). Israel is to be, therefore, a nation specially prized by God, because it is a kingdom of priests and so a holy people. The central affirmation (not just in position but in meaning) in this trilogy of expressions is that Israel is "a kingdom of priests." This has been understood (as in 2 Macc 2:17) to mean that Israel is both a kingship and a priesthood; that is, that it has, as a people, both royal and priestly attributes. But this is probably not what the expression really means. "Kingdom" here (as in Is 61:6) has no royal connotation, but stands for a socio-political unit, a commonwealth, a state. What is being affirmed is that Israel as a people has a priestly function. It is to be the priestly member of the family of nations. It is dedicated to God's service among the nations as priests function in a society, and so its life is to be "commensurate with the holiness of the covenant of God."<sup>26</sup> What this means is that Israel is to live according to the patterns sketched out in the covenant code (Ex 20:1-23:33) as a "contrast community," that is, "as a free, just, non-exploitative society that will provide an alternative societal model to the violent and oppressive city states and empires of the ancient Near East, among whom Israel is to live."<sup>27</sup> This is how Israel is to be Yhwh's people (Ex 6:7). This is to be its priestly service.

## 5. Conclusion

The Hebrew Bible thus offers an abundance of rich and complex material in which two understandings of the priesthood can be detected. There is what

25. See the discussion on the meaning of *segulla* in Frank MICHAELI, *Le Livre de l'Exode* (Neuchâtel: Delachaux et Niestle, 1974) 164-65.

26. CHILDS, *Exodus* (n.7 above) 367.

27. George SOARES-PRABHU, "Jesus and the Poor," in J. MURICKEN (ed.) *Poverty in India: Challenges and Responses* (Bangalore: Xavier Board, 1988) 280.

one might call the sacral understanding which Israel shares with its neighbours, in which priests are understood to be individuals who mediate between God and humankind; and there is a 'historical' understanding, possibly unique to Israel, in which the people as a whole is identified as a priestly people because it is charged with a prophetic and historical mission.

The bulk of the material on priesthood in the Hebrew Bible is concerned with the first of these understandings, what we have called sacral priesthood. It gives us glimpses of a long and complex history extending over a thousand years, from tribal Israel through the monarchy and the Exile to the colonized Israel of the time of Jesus. Three trends can be detected in the evolution of the priesthood during this long period:

(1) The first is the gradual subordination of the natural to the professional priesthood. While natural priests (the fathers of families and the heads of clans) were conspicuous in premonarchical Israel, natural priesthood during the monarchy was invested in the king alone, and with the end of the monarchy at the Exile it disappeared from Israel completely. The only priests recognized as such at the time of Jesus were professional priests belonging to well-defined priestly families.

(2) Meanwhile the professional priesthood evolved from a profusion of priestly families looking after the various sanctuaries of tribal Israel, into the solidly integrated, stratified priestly class, made up of chief priests, priests and levites, all claiming descent from Aaron and Levi, that we find at the time of Jesus.

(3) The function of this priesthood too evolved. The professional priests of tribal Israel were primarily guardians of shrines and dispensers of oracles; the monarchical priesthood was concerned with oracle, instruction and sacrifice; the post-exilic priesthood occupied itself with sacrifice alone. A priesthood concerned primarily with the downward mediation of the word evolved into a priesthood concerned with cult alone.

Meanwhile an alternative non-sacral understanding of priesthood had begun to appear, arising out of Israel's reflection on the 'covenant' (the primary category through which it expressed its relationship with God) and on its own role in saving history. Here the priesthood is not seen in terms of individual mediation but as the service rendered by a people to humankind for the realization of God's historical plan of salvation. Though it is not well developed in biblical thinking and found in only a few biblical texts, it is a significant understanding of the priesthood, specific to Israel and to its salvation historical religiosity. New Testament thinking will latch on to this historical priesthood rather than to the sacral priesthood of the Jews.

## II. Priesthood in the New Testament

Against the rich priestly background of the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament teaching on priesthood appears meagre indeed.<sup>28</sup> Jesus appears in the gospels as non-clerical, even as a somewhat anti-clerical figure. He is not a priest, for he does not belong to a priestly family; and he is shown in continuing conflict with the priestly establishment which ultimately arranges for his death. Against them Jesus takes up the prophetic critique of a cult that has taken the place of compassion (Mt 9:13); protests violently against their misuse of the temple premises for financial gain (Mk 11:15-19); rejects the laws of ritual purity on which the priestly caste system was built (Mk 7:1-23);<sup>29</sup> and freely associates with the ritually impure (Mk 2:13-15; Lk 15:1-2). His teaching borrows its imagery not from the cultic world of the priests, but from the secular world of everyday life, so that the only priestly figures that appear in his parables are the priest and the levite who are put to shame by the compassionate (and outcast!) Samaritan (Lk 10:29-37). Jesus does not call himself nor his disciples priests. His horizons are prophetic not priestly.

The followers of Jesus too are never called priests in the New Testament. Early Christianity does not know of a Christian priesthood in the traditional sacral sense of the word. What we do find in the New Testament about Christian priesthood is (1) an elaborate if locally limited discussion on the priesthood of Jesus; (2) a clear affirmation of the common or social priesthood of the Christian community; and (3) many references to Christian ministry which may give us a basis for understanding the 'ministerial' priesthood in the Church today.

### 1. The Priesthood of Christ

Jesus of Nazareth was not (sociologically) a priest in the Jewish society in which he lived. Yet the New Testament speaks (theologically) of the priesthood of Jesus Christ, that is, of the risen Lord. It does so explicitly only in a few, relatively late texts. 1 Tim 2:5 proclaims Jesus as the one mediator

28. Statistics are a striking indication. While in the Hebrew Bible (without the Apocrypha) the word *kohen* (to say nothing about its equivalents like the "sons of Aaron" or the "sons of Zadok") appears more than 768 times, the New Testament can boast of only 150 occurrences of *hierous* and *archiereus*.

29. On this see Roger P. BOOTH, *Jesus and the Laws of Purity: Tradition History and Legal History in Mark* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986). The conclusion of this dissertation that "Jesus intended his logion (Mk 7:15) to be understood in the widest sense, namely that cultic impurity *in toto* does not harm a man as much as moral impurity," is much too restrained. There is nothing in the text to suggest that Jesus thought that cultic impurity harms a person at all. His logion in Mk 7:15, I believe, does not merely declare the laws of ritual cleanness to be of less importance than ethical norms. It rejects those laws (and with them the whole system of purity/pollution) altogether. Paul has understood this well when (relying possibly on a saying of Jesus) he says: "I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself" (Rom 14:14) - cf. C.E.B. CRANFIELD, *The Epistle to the Romans*, II (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1979) 712-13.

between God and humankind. Rev 1:13 describes a vision in which the seer sees "someone like a son of man" dressed in priestly vestments; and the Letter to the Hebrews gives a sustained interpretation of the saving work of Jesus in the language of Old Testament priesthood and sacrifice.

These few texts are to be read against the background of the many implicit allusions to the priesthood of Jesus which can be found all over the New Testament. The theme is implied wherever the death of Jesus is interpreted as a sacrifice, either through the use of typological symbols from the Hebrew Bible - like the Paschal lamb (Jn 1:29; 19:36; 1 Cor 5:7; Rev 5:9); or the blood of the Covenant (Mk 14:24; Rom 3:25); or by means of the theological formula of expiation, the "for you/us" (*hyper humon/hemon*) of Lk 22:19-20; 1 Cor 11:24; Gal 3:13; Eph 5:2; 1 Thess 5:10; 1 Jn 3:16; or the "for many" (*anti/hyper pollon*) of Mk 10:45 and 14:24.

These texts suggest that the understanding of the death of Jesus as a covenant sacrifice or sacrifice of expiation, carrying with it an implication of the priesthood of Christ, was widespread in the New Testament Church. The implication has been explicated systematically and with great artistry in the *Letter to the Hebrews*, which has been rightly called "the most elegant and sophisticated and perhaps the most enigmatic text of first-century Christianity."<sup>30</sup> Using typological argument from the Hebrew Bible and images taken from the Jewish Temple cult interpreted in terms of a neo-Platonism which sees earthly realities as reflections of heavenly ones, the Letter spells out elaborately the significance of the priesthood of Christ, arguing that:

1. Because of (a) his solidarity with humankind in all things except sin (2:17-18; 4:15), and (b) his divine sonship, manifested through his perfect obedience in suffering (5:7-10), Jesus is constituted a priest for ever, in a new, definitive and eternal priesthood, through a solemn oath sworn by God (7:20-28). Jesus is thus both a natural priest (in virtue of his divine sonship), and a professional priest (because of his 'ordination' by God). He exercises perfectly the descending mediation of the word because he is the "radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being," through whom God can fully reveal himself to us (1:3); and implements fully the ascending mediation of cult because through his self-giving death he offers the perfectly efficacious sacrifice (10:1-18).

2. As the High Priest, Jesus seals the eschatological covenant in his own blood (9:11-15), and expiates for sin once and for all, by offering himself to accomplish God's will in a perfect act of obedience that is fulfilled in his death (9:23-28; 10:1-10). His sacrifice is thus the perfect covenant sacrifice and the perfect sacrifice of expiation.

3. Unlike the many sacrifices of the temple cult, which, because performed by sinful, mortal priests, cannot take away sin and so have to be offered again

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30. Harold W. ATTRIDGE, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989) p.1.

and again (7:23; 10:11), the one sacrifice offered "once and for all" (*ephapax*) by Jesus the High Priest, who is "holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens" (7:26), definitively reconciles humankind with God (7:23-25; 9:23-28; 10:1-18). It obtains our "eternal redemption" (9:12), "cleanses our consciences from acts that lead to death" (9:14), makes "perfect for ever those who are being made holy" (10:14), and gives us access to the heavenly sanctuary (20:19).

4. The perfect priesthood and the perfect sacrifice of Christ thus makes obsolete every other priesthood and every other cult. As Donald Gelpi sums it up, the Letter to the Hebrews teaches us that Jesus, "a priest for ever of the order of Melchizedek, through the single, eternally efficacious sacrifice of his death, through his eternal and efficacious intercession for us at the throne of God, and through the new eschatological future which his death and glorification began, has ended once and for all any need for a hieratic levitical priesthood (Heb 7:11-28; 8:1-10:18)."<sup>31</sup> Indeed he has ended the need for any kind of sacral priesthood whatever. In this eschatological age of God's definitive offer of salvation, there is only one real priest, the unique mediator Jesus Christ, and only one true sacrifice, the sacrifice of the cross, understood as the culminating expression of the whole "self-giving" of Jesus.

The Letter to the Hebrews leads to a Copernican revolution in our thinking about the priesthood. It announces the radical death of cult. No cultic priesthood is any longer valid, except the one eternal priesthood of Christ; no ritual sacrifice is of any value except the one sacrifice of the cross. This implies a radical secularization of the priesthood too. For it is now the non-sacral 'layman', Jesus (who does not belong to any priestly class), who is the only true priest; and it is the utterly profane event of his crucifixion (the execution of a legally condemned criminal), which is the one effective sacrifice. The days of a sacral, mediating priesthood are over. There can be no return to the sacral priesthood of the Old Testament or of any other religion, past or present.

But this does not mean that priesthood is to be eliminated from the Christian community. Rather its priesthood must be understood differently. The exclusive and definitive priesthood of Christ will be effective only if there is a way of making his priestly action present in his community. Precisely because the sacrifice of Jesus is definitive, once and for all, the 'mother of all sacrifices', it has to be 'actualized', made effectively present in different places and at different times. The work of reconciliation wrought once and for all by Jesus calls therefore for a continuing ministry of reconciliation among his followers, who, as "ambassadors of Christ," are entrusted with a "message of reconciliation" which invites humankind to be reconciled with one another and with God (2 Cor 5:18-20). It is in this ministry of reconciliation (which means,

31. Donald L. GELPI, art. "Priesthood", in Peter E. FINK (ed.). *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1990), p. 1015.



as I hope to show, working for the eschatological 'contrast community' which Jesus called Kingdom of God) that we find the essence of Christian priesthood. The New Testament sees this ministry realized collectively in the common or social priesthood of all Christians, and individually in the professional, 'ministerial' priesthood of certain 'officials' in the Church.

## 2. The Common Priesthood of Christians

The New Testament mentions explicitly (though not often) the 'social' priesthood common to all Christians. In a clear reference to Ex 19:6 which announces the priestly character of the people of God, and to Is 43:21 which proclaims their election as a people who will proclaim God's praise, 1 Pet 2:9-10 describes the community of those who come to Jesus, "the living stone," as "a chosen people (*genos eklekton*), a royal priesthood (*basileion hierateuma*), a holy nation (*ethnos hagion*), a people belonging to God (*laos eis peripoiesin*)," who have been called in order that they might "declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." The theme of this priesthood of the people is taken up by Rev 5:9-10, the hymn which praises the Lamb for having ransomed with its life persons "from every tribe, and language and people and nation," and for having made them "to be a kingdom and priests (*basileian kai hierais*) to serve God." It probably underlies also the exhortation in Rom 12:1 in which Paul urges his readers to "offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God; this is your reasonable act of worship (*logike latreia*)"; and that in Heb 13:15-16 which encourages Christians "to continually offer to God, through Jesus, a sacrifice of praise (*thusia ain:seos*)" which consists in confessing his name and in living out this confession by not forgetting to do good and by sharing what they have with others.

We have here the beginnings of a theology of the common priesthood of Christians. The theology is still inchoate and needs to be systematically developed. Its elements can, however, be culled from the texts given above. These tell us that:

1. The Christian community, 'the people of God, forms a priestly people, in whom the 'social priesthood' promised to and prefigured by Israel is realized (1 Pet 2:9-10).

2. This common priesthood is founded on the priesthood of Christ (Rev 5:9-10) and exercised through it (Heb 13:15).

3. The function of this priesthood is to proclaim God's mighty act of salvation (1 Pet 2:9) wrought through the death of Jesus (Heb 5:9). Such proclamation is to be both verbal proclamation, normally in a cultic context ("the fruit of lips that confess his name"), and a proclamation in action, expressed through doing good and sharing what we have (Heb 13:15). It is to take place, therefore, not just in cult but in life. The sacrifice appropriate to

this priesthood is thus not merely "a sacrifice of praise" (Heb 13:15) but a "living sacrifice" of themselves (Rom 12:1).

4. This means that cult is to be integrated into life. The "reasonable cult" (*logike latreia*) of the Christian community is in fact to be primarily the Christian life of its members. "Christian worship," says Ernst Kasemann, commenting on Romans 12:1, "does not consist of what is practised at sacred sites, at sacred times, and with sacred acts. It is the offering of bodily existence in the otherwise profane sphere." This does not mean that there is no place for worship in Christian life. What it means is that worship serves life, not life worship. "Either the whole of Christian life is worship, and the gatherings and sacramental acts of the community provide equipment and instruction for this," Kasemann comments, "or these gatherings and acts lead in fact to absurdity." Cultic worship in the Christian community is always the sacramentalization, the symbolic representation of Christian life, through which we come to an awareness of what this Christian life is, and find the courage to live it.

The common priesthood of Christians is not to be thought of as a participation in the ministerial priesthood of the Church. The Christian is not a watered down priest, any more than a priest is a watered down religious. Rather the common priesthood is a primary dimension of Christian life deriving from the relation which each Christian has to the unique priesthood of Jesus. It is this common priesthood which is therefore the ground and the foundation of the ministerial priesthood. For bishops, priests or deacons are first and primarily Christians. Their ministerial priesthood is a concretization of the common priesthood of the Christian people. As Samuel Rayan used to say, in his usual felicitous way, "My priesthood is the sacrament of the priesthood of my mother." That is why Augustine could tell his people: "What I am for you terrifies me; what I am with you consoles me. For you I am a bishop; with you I am a Christian. The former is a title of duty; the latter one of grace."<sup>34</sup> It would be difficult to find a more eloquent affirmation of the truth that ministerial priesthood grows out of Christian life.

### 3. The Ministerial Priesthood

The New Testament does not speak of a ministerial 'priesthood', that is, of a special body of professional priests, distinct in their priesthood from other members of the Christian community. It refers, of course, to people exercising various functions or holding various offices in the community, but those are never designated "priests" (*hierais*). Cultic terms like *hierous* ('priest') or *archieus* ('chief priest') are reserved for Jewish (Mt 12:4; Mk 1:44; Lk 1:5;

32. Ernst KASEMANN, *Commentary on the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), p. 329.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

34. AUGUSTINE, *Sermo* 340 (Migne, PL 38): 1483.

In 1:19) or gentile (Acts 14:13) cult personnel; for the priesthood of Christ (Heb 4:14; 8:1; 10:21); and for the common priesthood of the Christian community (1 Pet 2:9; Rev 5:10). They are never used of an individual Christian. In the New Testament there are no Christian *hiereis* (sacred persons, or cultic priests).

But the New Testament frequently mentions various officials who exercise particular functions in the community. We hear of *apostoloi* (messengers), *episkopoi* (superintendents, overseers), *presbyteroi* (city fathers, elders), and *diakonoi* (servants). These titles are not religious: they are all derived from Greek secular usage. The precise function of the officials to whom they refer, and their relation to one another, is not always clear since there is a great deal of uncertainty about the organization of the Christian communities that existed in New Testament times.<sup>35</sup> What is certain is that ministry in the early Christian Church was a great deal more fluid, flexible and pluriform than it is today. For one thing there was no monolithic 'Catholic' Church with a highly centralized structure, covering the whole of the then Christian world. Instead we have a rather uneasy communion of various local churches, often differing sharply in theology, Church order and ministry.

Several forms of Church order can therefore be detected in the New Testament with more or less plausibility:

1. It seems likely that the Jerusalem church was at first led by the Twelve who had been appointed by Jesus as representatives of eschatological Israel (Mt 19:28). But their influence in the community soon waned, for we hear little of them in Luke's account of the early Church which has come down to us as the 'Acts of the Apostles'. After the death of Herod Agrippa (44 CE), James, a relative of Jesus but not one of the Twelve, takes command of the Jerusalem church and adopts a synagogal structure of government in which the community is ruled by a council of *presbyteroi* or 'elders' (Acts 11:30; 15:2; 16:21; 21:18).

2. There are no references to 'elders' in the certainly authentic letters of Paul, suggesting that a very different model of Church structure was followed in the communities to which they were written. The Pauline churches seem to have been charismatic communities operating under the general supervision of the Apostle, without any clearly structured organization. Ministry belonged to all, for each member had a charism (Rom 14:4-8). If certain functions like that of apostle, prophet and teacher are specially mentioned (1 Cor 1:28), these are not to be seen as ecclesiastical appointments, but are rather as spontaneously assumed ministries given by the Spirit. The churches founded by Paul, at

35. On ministry in the New Testament see Eduard SCHWEIZER, *Church Order in the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1961); Hans von CAMPENHAUSEN, *Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Centuries* (London: Chapman, 1971); James D.G. DUNN, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1977) 103-23.

least at the beginning, were communities "of free fellowship, developing through the living interplay of spiritual gifts and ministries, without the benefit of official authority or responsible 'elders'".<sup>36</sup>

3. The Gospel of Matthew, Dunn suggests, gives us a roughly Jewish equivalent to this. Though Peter is given a special representative role (14:28-31; 16:16-19) typifying both the little faith and the responsibilities of all the disciples, Matthew's church is

best described as a *brotherhood* (5:22-24.47; 7:3-5; 18:15. 21.35; 23:8), grouped round the elder brother Jesus (12:49f; 18:20; 25:40; 28:10) striving to develop a form of outgoing life and all-member ministry amid Jewish hostility (with the most prominent ministries those of Peter, prophets and teachers), and conscious of the opposite dangers both of hierarchical structure, which inhibits the manifold ministry of the brothers and of a charismatic prophetism which divorces miracles and revelations too sharply from a proper loyalty to the law.<sup>37</sup>

4. 1 Peter suggests a church in transition. As in the Pauline churches, every Christian is believed to have a charism for the service of the community (4:10), and the community as a whole is described as a 'royal priesthood' (2:9). But there is also, as in the Jerusalem community, a well-defined circle of 'elders' who 'shepherd' the people, under the 'chief shepherd', who is Christ (5:1-4). The church thus seems to be at "that stage when the Pauline churches . . . had already begun to adopt and adapt the model of a Jewish Christian church order, without yet losing the flexibility and freedom of the Pauline charismatic community."<sup>38</sup>

5. In John not only are references to ministry and office meagre (20:20; 21:1-9), but there is no charismatic community, whose members are mutually dependent on each other because they share complementary gifts. The Johannine tradition insists strongly on mutual love among those who follow Jesus (13:34-35; 15:12; 1 Jn 3:23; 2 Jn 5), but these find salvation not through the community but through their individual relationship with Jesus. Each member belongs individually to Jesus, as each branch is separately joined to the vine (15:1), but there is no mutual interdependence in that belonging. Rather; "everything is seen in terms of the individual's immediate relationship to God through the Spirit and the word."<sup>39</sup>

6. Dunn would see the 'Pauline' letter to the Hebrews, which identified ministry so exclusively with Jesus that each believer can draw near to God through him alone without depending on any other believer, as one half-way

36. von CAMPENHAUSEN (n.35 above), p.70.

37. DUNN (n.35 above) 117-18. While Dunn's description of Matthew's understanding of the community is basically correct, it must be seen, I believe, not as a description of the actual community Matthew wrote for, but as an ideal recommended to a church that was suffering from charismatic false prophets (7:15-23) on the one hand, and status seeking, oppressive hierarchs (23:9-12) on the other. The actual structure of Matthew's community probably lay somewhere between the free Pauline churches and the stratified churches of the pastorals.

38. DUNN (n.35 above), p. 226.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 119.

house between Paul and John; and the 'Johannine' Book of Revelation, which has 'elders' in heaven but none on earth, and where the only distinctive ministry mentioned (and that overwhelmingly) is that of the 'prophet' (2:20; 10:7; 11:10; 16:6; 18:20; 22:6), as another.<sup>40</sup> I suspect that this orderly scheme is a little too neat to be convincing. A great variety of Church orders certainly existed in early Christianity, but I am not sure that they can all be fitted as neatly into the two lines of development (towards the institutional Church of the Pastorals or the 'sectarian' Church of John) as Dunn would have us believe.

7. In the Pastoral Letters we do find a Church more structured than any other in the New Testament. The terms 'elders' (*presbyteroi*), absent in the authentic letters of Paul and found in Matthew only for Jewish leaders, reappears conspicuously in the Pastorals as "a title for the bearer of an office of leadership in the Church" (1 Tim 5:17-19; Tim 1:5-6).<sup>41</sup> Alongside these elders there appear 'overseers' or *episkopoi* (1 Tim 3:1-7; Tit 1:7-9); and 'deacons' or *diakonoi* (1 Tim 3:8-13). While the *diakonoi* are quite distinct from the *episkopoi* and the *presbyteroi* with whom they are associated, *presbyteroi* and *episkopoi* are used interchangeably (compare Acts 20:18 and 20:28; Tit 1:5 and 1:7), and originally probably represented the same office of "the guidance and representation of the congregation and the work of preaching and conducting worship, when there was no apostle, prophet or teacher present."<sup>42</sup> It is true that while *presbyteros* is always used in the plural when referring to Christian ministry, suggesting colleges of elders, *episkopos* is twice found in the singular (1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:7). But this may be because in these texts "the reference is," as Beyer has pointed out, "to the bishop as a type, and not to the number of bishops in a given place."<sup>43</sup> Several *episkopoi* overseeing a given church are explicitly mentioned in Acts 20:28 and Phil 1:1. There is no monarchical or mono-episcopacy in the pastorals nor anywhere else in the New Testament. For that we have to wait for Ignatius of Antioch at the beginning of the second century.

8. With Ignatius of Antioch (110 CE) we seem to have come to a full-fledged monarchical episcopate. There are references to a three-tier hierarchy of *episkopos*, *presbyteroi* and *diakonoi* in his letters (Mag. 2-3); and the bishop is presented as the supreme head of the Church, in sole charge of teaching and worship:

Let no one do anything pertaining to the Church apart from the bishop. Let that be held a valid Eucharist which is under the bishop or one to whom he shall have committed it... It is

40. *Ibid.*, pp. 119-21.

41. Gunter BORNKAMM, art. "Presbys", in *TDNT* VI (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968) p. 666.

42. Hermann BEYER, art. "Episkopos in the New Testament", *TDNT* II (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) p. 617.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 617.

not lawful apart from the bishop either to baptize or hold a love-feast; but whatever he shall approve this is also well pleasing to God (Smyr. 8)<sup>44</sup>

But this is already the post-New Testament period.

In the New Testament, however, *presbyteros* and *episkopos* probably stood for equivalent offices, the former being a Jewish (Acts 11:30; 15:2-6; 16:4), the latter a Greek (Phil 1:1) designation for 'it. The Pastorals, then, represent both "a growing rapprochement between the more formal structures which Jewish Christianity took over from the synagogue, and the more dynamic charismatic structure of the Pauline churches," as well as a development towards the monarchical episcopacy of Ignatius. The *diakonoi* seem to have filled a lesser office, though it is difficult for us to say what exactly their functions were. The story in Acts describing the appointment of seven "deacons" (the word itself is not used in the text) to "serve at table" (that is, do relief work) so that the Twelve could devote themselves unhindered to the ministry of the word (Acts 6:1-6), is Lucan fancy. For the seven (as Acts itself notes) did not serve at table, but were preachers and missionaries far more energetic and effective than the Twelve. "The little that we hear about these 'relief officers' in Acts," Haenchen pointedly remarks, "shows them much rather as Christian preachers and missionaries."<sup>45</sup> The seven were probably charismatic leaders who had emerged among the Hellenistic Christians of Jerusalem and formed a more or less autonomous structure of their own. Beyer's suggestion that the office of the diaconate in the Christian community might have derived from that of the *hazzan hakk<sup>e</sup>neset*, who assisted the president of the synagogue, the *rosh hakk<sup>e</sup>neset* (much as the *diakonos* assisted the *episkopos*),<sup>46</sup> is interesting, but founders on the facts that the *hazzan* is never translated as *diakonos* but always as *uperetes* in Greek, and that nothing in the New Testament suggests that the *diakonos* was ever an assistant to the *episkopos*. That the function of the deacon included "administration and practical service" is likely from the term itself.<sup>47</sup> But there is no way of determining just what these administrative duties were, and to what extent they were (as in the later diaconate) associated with service at worship.

New Testament data, then, are too uncertain for us to be able to spell out clearly the functions of these offices. But it is certain that they were all

44. Cf. Raymond E. BROWN and John P. MEIER, *Antioch and Rome: New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity* (London: Chapman, 1983), for an excellent account of the development of Christian ministry in Antioch (as shown in Galatians, Matthew and Ignatius) and Rome (as shown in Romans, 1 Peter and Clement). As Brown points out, it is by no means certain how widely Ignatius' understanding of Church order was accepted in his time. Indeed "his incessant exhortations to be submissive to the bishop seem to indicate that the role of the single-bishop is relatively new in these churches" (75, n. 166).

45. Ernst HAENCHEN, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971), pp. 265-66.

46. Hermann BEYER, art. "Diakonos", in *TDNT* II (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), p. 91.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 90.

concerned with the pastoral care of the community. They assume responsibility for direction of the communities which the apostles (those who had experienced the Risen Lord),<sup>48</sup> the prophets and the teachers (the wandering charismatic preachers of early Christianity)<sup>49</sup> had founded.

As pastors (note how *poimen* [shepherd] and *episkopos* are linked in Acts 20:28 and 1 Pet 5:2), the *presbyteroi*, *episkopoi* and *diakonoi* would have had a role in the community's worship. But it is important to remember that they were not cultic personnel. If they presided over the Eucharist (and it is not certain that they always did),<sup>50</sup> they did so because they held a pastoral office in the community. They did not hold a pastoral office because they presided over the Eucharist. Pastoral office preceded any cultic function. "In contrast to the levitical priest who belonged by ancestry to a religious power elite, the first leaders of the Christian community," Gelpi reminds us, "exercised a charismatic ministry of service and of oversight."<sup>51</sup>

Oversight and service are a good description of ministry in the New Testament, and of the Christian priesthood which grows out of it. For if the *episkopoi*, *presbyteroi* and *diakonoi* were engaged in 'oversight', that is, the pastoral care of Christian communities, they were engaged in this strictly as a service. It is striking that the New Testament consistently avoids designating its officials by the many Greek honorifics then in current use to describe religious or secular office. So we find that: (a) *arche* ("head", "beginning"), which describes office in terms of precedence, is used in the New Testament only of Jewish and Gentile authorities (Lk 12:11; Acts 23:5; Tit 3:1) or of

48. The traditional identification of the 'apostles' with the Twelve is not borne out in the New Testament. There the apostles are a wider group than the Twelve, and include all those who have been commissioned by an experience of the Risen Lord (1 Cor 9:1; 15:3-7; Gal 1:19; Gal 2:8).

49. The sociological grid offered by Gerd THEISSEN in his *The First Followers of Jesus: A Sociological Analysis of the Earliest Christianity* (London: SCM, 1978) which sees the development of Christianity as the result of the interaction of wandering charismatics and sympathizers in local communities is helpful in understanding the origins of Christian ministry. Particularly enlightening is the change of role-structure which, Theissen suggests, occurred when the Christian movement shifted from a Palestinian to a Hellenistic milieu: "Whereas in earliest Palestinian Christianity the wandering charismatics were the decisive authorities, in a Hellenistic setting the chief emphasis was soon laid on local communities. The resident authorities to be found in them soon became the normative figures for earliest Christianity, first of all as a collegial body, then, as early as the beginning of the second century, as a monarchical episcopate (Ignatius of Antioch). On the other hand, the successors of the earliest Christian wandering charismatics were increasingly brought into disrepute, as is shown by III John" (115).

50. BROWN (n.35 above), 41, observes that there is "simply no compelling evidence for the classic thesis that the members of the Twelve always presided when they were present, and that there was a chain of ordination passing the power of presiding at the Eucharist from the Twelve to missionary apostles and presbyter-bishops." Neither, of course, is there compelling evidence to the contrary, and much less evidence that any baptized member could, in New Testament times, preside over the eucharistic celebration. The New Testament is simply silent on this point—cf. John Jay HUGHES, art. "Christian Priesthood" in ELIADE, *The Encyclopaedia of Religions* XI (n.23 above) p.538.

51. GELPI (n.31 above), p. 1015.

Christ as the head of the cosmos (Col 1:18). It is never used for a Christian official of any kind; (b) *time* ('value', 'honour'), which describes office in terms of status or dignity, is found only once in the New Testament to describe the dignity of the Jewish high priest (Heb 5:4); (c) *telos* ('end', 'goal'), which describes office in terms of power, is not used in the New Testament at all.<sup>52</sup>

Instead, almost without exception, the New Testament word for office within the Christian community is *diakonia*, a word whose root meaning is "to serve at table." The fact that it uses so consistently this utterly unexpected, unbiblical and wholly non-religious term to designate every form of Christian office is an indication of how essential this attitude of service is to the New Testament understanding of its 'priesthood'. And indeed it must be so. For the pastoral priesthood of the New Testament is not (like other priesthoods) a mediating priesthood in its own right, but merely the making present of the priesthood of Jesus, who came not to be served but to serve (Mk 10:45) and who willed his community to become a hierarchy of service, not a hierarchy of status or of power (Mk 10:43). In a saying which is found no less than six times and in three independent forms in the gospels (Mk 10:45; Lk 22:27; Jn 13:1-17); and which carries in its multiple attestation, in the rigour of its challenge, and in the moving rhythm of its style, an unmistakable note of authenticity, Jesus says:

You know that those who are supposed to rule over the gentiles  
lord it over them,  
And their great men  
exercise their authority over them.  
But it shall not be so among you!  
But whoever would be great among you  
must be your servant,  
And whoever would be first among you  
must be the slave of all.  
For the Son of Man also came  
not to be served, but to serve  
and to give up his life as a ransom for many.

#### 4. Conclusion

The 'traditional' view that Jesus founded the Church in gathering together a community of disciples and appointing twelve Apostles to lead them, so that all subsequent authority in the post-Easter churches derives from Jesus through the twelve Apostles, finds little support in the New Testament. The Church which emerged after the Easter experience was not simply continuous with the unstructured movement which Jesus initiated as a reform movement within Judaism; and while the Twelve, because of their connection with Jesus, were no doubt significant figures in the early Church, they were apparently much less significant for the early Christian mission than the often anonymous

52. SCHWEIZER (n.35 above), p.171.



wandering charismatic preachers (apostles, prophets, teachers) who founded the first churches in Palestine and in the diaspora. The churches they founded, while linked to Jesus by tradition, were not necessarily authenticated by a chain of succession reaching back to the Twelve. Side by side with leaders appointed by the founding apostles and prophets (many of whom, like Paul, had been commissioned not by the Twelve but directly by the Risen Lord), the communities seem to have developed spontaneous charismatic leadership, authenticated directly by the Spirit.

The routinization of charisma inevitably led to the increasing organization of these communities, just as the dissensions produced by irresponsible charismatic leaders led to attempts to control charisma through recognized structures of authority. The Lucan concept of the "Twelve Apostles" who are the ultimate guarantees of authenticity must be seen as one such attempt.

Church structures varied from place to place but in course of their evolution these structures gradually converged, so that by the beginning of the second century a monarchical episcopate centred on the Eucharist had begun to appear. While the New Testament shows a trend towards the development of such a mono-episcopal structure, it remains faithful to its insight that the mediating priesthood is restricted to Jesus and to the community he has founded. Church officials, even in the latest strata of the New Testament, are never called or thought of as sacral persons or cultic priests. They are seen as pastoral ministers, exercising a charismatic ministry of service and oversight.

### III. Christian Priesthood in India Today

The Christian priesthood has grown out of this charismatic ministry of service and oversight. As defined by its New Testament origins, the Christian priesthood, then, is not a cultic function (Jesus Christ is our only true priest); it is a pastoral ministry. This expression encapsulates with great precision the true understanding of the Christian priesthood, defining both its content (pastoral) and its style of functioning (ministry). The Christian priest is not a cultic functionary (a *hiereus*, a *pujari*) that is, a sacral person who has been consecrated to preside over the Eucharist or administer the sacraments. He is a pastor, that is, someone who has been officially charged with the building up of the Christian (and eventually the human) community, by making the saving work of Jesus, his 'for us', effectively present to us through word, sign and style of life.<sup>53</sup> Any cultic function that the priest exercises is at the service of his pastoral office. This pastoral function the Christian priest exercises as a 'ministry', that is an act of service, not a manifestation of skill, of status or of power.

53. Heinrich SCHLIER, "Grundelemente des priesterlichen Amtes in Neuen Testament, *TheolPhil* 44 (1969) p. 175.

Both these essential elements of the Christian priesthood are, I believe, endangered today. In the course of its long and chequered history, the Christian priesthood has tended to shift its orientation from pastoral to cultic; and it has increasingly tended to replace an attitude of service by a striving for status and power. That is, the Christian priesthood has increasingly assumed a sacred character and a superior social status: it has been *sacralized* and *clericalized*. It is important that we understand these distortions, if we are to recover the authentic meaning of the Christian priesthood.

### 1. The Sacralization of the Christian Priesthood

The sacralization of the Christian ministry begins early. While the Christian ministry is not linked to the celebration of the Eucharist in the New Testament, in the post-apostolic age the cultic function of the Christian minister begins to be increasingly stressed. By the end of the second century, Kenan Osborne tells us in his simple and sober history of the Roman Catholic priesthood, "we begin to hear the connection of *episkopos* and *presbyter* to *hiereus*, *sacerdos*, *pontifex*. . . . Liturgy begins to be the basis for Church leadership, rather than (as previously) Church leadership be the basis for liturgical leadership."<sup>54</sup> There are now increasing references to the ordained ministers as specially "chosen" or "set apart" and to bishops and occasionally to presbyters, too, as high priests of the New Covenant. These tendencies "culminate in the 4th century in the theological movement known as sacerdotalism."<sup>55</sup> Mohler describes "the triumph of sacerdotalism" vividly:

By the end of the fourth century sacerdotalism had become the ordinary mode of speaking of the Christian clergy, temple terms replacing those of the synagogue. Although vestiges of this trend go back through Cyprian to the Didache, it is not till the third and fourth centuries that the old words were rather completely replaced by the new. . . . Christian episcopals became high priests, presbyters became priests, deacons levites, the eucharistic banquet a sacrifice on a table that is now an altar in a sanctuary, the Holy of Holies of the New Israel.<sup>56</sup>

The process of sacerdotalism advances a step further in the twelfth century when the term the 'true body of Christ' (*corpus Christi verum*), which all then had stood the Christian community, began to be applied (in reaction to Berengar's spiritualization of the 'real presence') to the Eucharist, which previously had been called the 'mystical body of Christ' (*corpus Christi mysticum*). The priest who "according to long standing consensus" was ordained for the "body of Christ" (that is, for the service the Church), was now seen as ordained for the Eucharist. "Once the *corpus Christi* for which the

54. Kenan OSBORNE, *Priesthood: A History of the Ordained Ministry in the Roman Catholic Church* (New York: Paulist, 1988) 128.

55. GELPI (n.31 above), p. 1015.

56. James A. MOHLER, *The Origin and Evolution of the Priesthood* (New York: Alba House, 1970), p. 104.

priest was ordained was understood to be the Eucharist, his transition from the minister of the Gospel to the cultic servant of the altar was complete.<sup>57</sup>

This cultic understanding of Christian priesthood was given a theological basis by scholasticism which defined priesthood in terms of divine power to consecrate the Eucharist,<sup>58</sup> and was canonised in the Council of Trent, whose first canon on the sacrament of Order, faithful to this scholastic understanding, speaks of "the visible and external priesthood contained in the New Testament" in terms of the "power of consecrating and offering the true body and blood of the Lord and of remitting sins" (ND 1714). This "theory of a eucharistic priesthood," as Osborne calls it,<sup>59</sup> dominated the Western theology of the priesthood until Vatican II. Indeed it continues to dominate the consciousness of the Indian church even today. For the attempt of Vatican II to integrate the eucharistic priesthood of Trent into a broader understanding of Christian ministry as a continuation of the threefold ministry of Christ the Teacher, Sanctifier and Leader, and so to restore to the Christian priesthood the vital pastoral dimension it had lost,<sup>60</sup> has not yet, I suspect, affected the popular understanding of the Catholic priesthood in India.

For in practice if not in theory, in popular belief if not in theological teaching, the priest in India is seen as a 'sacred person' (*sacerdos*), whose primary identity derives from his cultic function. He has a sacred character (analogous to the character received by a Christian at baptism) which sets him apart from the lay-Christian and empowers him to officiate at cultic celebrations in a way in which the lay person is not able to do. The priest has unique sacral powers - the powers to transubstantiate bread and wine at Mass, and to forgive sins. He receives these powers at his ordination, which is understood not primarily as his commissioning to a particular office in the community, invested with a specific role, but as the transfer of a quasi-magical power, in somewhat the way in which power was transmitted by the prophet Elijah to his successor Elisha by the laying on of his power-filled mantle (1 Kings 19:19; 2 Kings 4:14-15). Not only is such an understanding evident in popular (hopefully fast disappearing) fantasies about 'the hands of a priest', but it is suggested by the ordination rite itself. For here the Christian priesthood is

57. HUGHES (n.50 above), p. 538.

58. OSBORNE (n.54 above), pp.204-208.

59. *Ibid.*, As Osborne remarks: "The use of the word 'theory' is deliberate here, although in the centuries between high scholasticism and Vatican II many theologians would have called this the 'ordinary teaching of the Church'. From our vantage point of Vatican II we can look back and see that it can only be a theological theory, since the bishops at Vatican II moved deliberately beyond this eucharistic approach to priesthood, making a broader understanding of priest the 'ordinary magisterium of the Church' for our day." The hermeneutical implications of this are fascinating. How much of what is judged "ordinary magisterium of the Church" today will become "theological theory" tomorrow?

60. Cf. *Presbyterium Ordinis*, n. 2-3, and the comments of Osborne (n.54 above) pp. 308-24.

expressly associated with the Old Testament priesthood of Aaron and Levi - even though the New Testament is at pains to tell us that the Old Testament priesthood (like the Old Testament Law) has been 'fulfilled' and therefore abrogated by Jesus.

Because he is a sacral person the Catholic priest is seen as set apart from 'the world'. He belongs to the realm of the sacred, and must be distinguished from his 'lay', non-priestly contemporaries by special forms of life-style and dress, which reinforce the distinction between the sacred and the profane, even though Jesus, the Word made 'flesh', sought to overcome this distinction through his life and his teaching.<sup>61</sup> In the Catholic priesthood this distinction takes a sharply visible form in priestly celibacy - an abstention from sex, which, in one form or other, is a requirement for cultic purity in many religious traditions (1 Sam 21:4-5; cf. Lev 15:16-18), and an indication of full-time dedication to the service of the gods in others.<sup>62</sup> Allied to this is the prohibition from engaging in what are judged to be 'worldly' pursuits. The priest may not take part in trade - though he may (we know with what disastrous results) direct a bank! He is not allowed to 'enter into politics' - but he may as part of the Vatican's diplomatic service indulge in political gamesmanship to advocate (as recently in the Philippines) quite dubious political causes!

Examples of this kind point to a basic inconsistency in our understanding of the priesthood in the Church today. While the sacral character of the priest continues to be strongly asserted, the functions a priest is entrusted with are not restricted to the sacral or even the merely pastoral sphere. Catholic priests do not merely administer sacraments, look after parishes or teach religion - they run farms, direct observatories, teach high mathematics, run mammoth developmental projects, do research in nuclear physics, and even conduct schools of business management, which John Kenneth Galbraith likened to the 'seminaries' of capitalism,<sup>63</sup> but which, capitalism being what it is, might, I suggest, be better described as schools for the priests of Mammon. These are odd avocations for Christ's priests!

61. George SOARES-PRAEHU, "The Sacred in the Secular: Reflections on a Johannine Sutra (Jn 1:14)," *Jeevadhara* XVII/98 (1987) 125-40. I am not necessarily disapproving of the distinctive forms of priestly life mentioned here (specifically clerical celibacy). I merely wish to draw attention to the often distorted understanding of the priesthood they may indicate.

62. See MOHLER (n.56 above) 91-100 for a judicious account of the origins and development of clerical celibacy in the early Christian Church. The requirement of celibacy is linked to the sacralization of the priesthood. "In the early synagogue structure of the Church, married presbyters were not only allowed but required. But as presbyters became priests, and the head presbyter a high priest, on the model of the Old Testament priesthood, levitical ideas of purity were insisted on more and more" (93).

63. John Kenneth GALBRAITH, *The Age of Uncertainty* (London: Adre Deutsch, 1977) 272. The point is brilliantly made in a pair of juxtaposed photographs entitled 'The Priesthood: Seminarians at Harvard Business School' and 'The Priesthood: Seminarians in Spain.'

## 2. *The Clericalization of the Christian Priesthood*

How is one to explain this oddity? What has happened, I believe, is that side by side with its progressive sacralization, the Christian priesthood has been shaped by a parallel movement of clericalization. Instead of being understood as one ministry among others, with its own precise and limited functions (like the episcopacy or the presbyterate or diaconate of the New Testament) the 'priesthood' has swallowed up all the other ministries and come to stand for an omni-competent clerical caste (rather like the brahmans in India today) which is defined by status rather than by its function.

Such clericalization, Hughes suggests, reaches back to the "proclamation of the Church as the official religion of the Roman empire by Constantine in 313," when "civic privileges granted to the clergy encouraged the development of a clerical caste system and obscured the servant role that is prominent in the gospels."<sup>64</sup> It received an elaborate theological legitimation from the 6th century Syrian monk who wrote under the pseudonym of Dionysius the Areopagite, the upper class Greek said to have been converted by Paul through an otherwise disastrous speech at Athens (Acts 17:34). The Pseudo-Dionysius, a Christian Platonist, believed that the structure of the Church on earth was meant to be a reflection of the structure of the heavenly court. Just as the heavenly court is made up of three descending hierarchies of angels (with seraphim, cherubim and thrones making up the first hierarchy; dominations, powers and authorities, the second; and principalities, archangels and angels, the third), so too the Church is by "holy ordinance" made up of two ranked hierarchies (a superior clerical hierarchy made up of bishops, priests and deacons; and an inferior lay hierarchy made up of religious, laity and catechumens)! As Gelpi comments,

This quaint understanding of Church order (which was highly influential in the Middle Ages, because it was taken to be an accurate description of the structure of the first century Church) made the clergy into the laity's only channel of divine grace, and with the disappearance of the catechumenate left the laity in a position of pure passivity on the bottom rung of the hierarchical ladder.<sup>65</sup>

There they will obviously remain, in spite of fervid exhortations to them to assume their rightful place in the Church, as long as the sacerdotal and clerical models of the priesthood persist.

## 3. *Understanding the Christian Priesthood Today*

What is needed then is to reverse the tide of sacerdotalism and clericalism that has "transformed ordained Church leadership from (pastoral) service into a (cultic) power elite"<sup>66</sup> - that is, into precisely the opposite of what Jesus

64. HUGHES (n.50 above), p. 538.

65. GELPI (n.31 above), p. 1016.

66. *Ibid.*, p. 1018.

intended the ministry to be! If we are to do this we must move away from the pre-Vatican II understanding of the priesthood as clerical status and get back to the New Testament understanding of the priesthood as ministerial function. For it is the absence of a clear functional understanding that has, I believe, turned the Catholic priesthood into the paternalistic, omni-competent, multi-national, status conscious bureaucracy that it often is today.

What then is the function of the priest? In its decree on the ministry and life of priests (*Presbyterorum Ordinis*), Vatican II affirms:

To the degree of their authority and in the name of their bishops, priests exercise the office of Christ, the Head and the Shepherd. Thus they gather God's family together as a brotherhood of living unity, and lead it through Christ and in the Spirit to God the Father (*Presbyterorum Ordinis* 6).

The priest is seen here as the builder of community. If *Lumen Gentium* stresses his traditional cultic role, affirming that "in virtue of the sacred power with which he is endowed the ministerial priest instructs and rules the priestly people, performs in the person of Christ the eucharistic sacrifice and offers it to God in the name of all the people" (10), this traditional understanding must (according to the normal hermeneutics of conciliar documents) be integrated into the newer understanding that the decree on priestly life provides. The cultic role of the priest, even though reaffirmed in the Council is, therefore, not to be taken as his primary role. It is part of his mission to gather together "God's family as a brotherhood of unity." Such an understanding of the Christian priesthood is certainly much closer to the New Testament than the popular identification of the priest as an agent of cultic power.

But Vatican II does not, I suggest, go far enough. Its understanding of the priesthood is still too closed, even in terms of its own implicit logic. The family of God which the priest builds is not, as the Council repeatedly acknowledges, a closed, communal family. It is a family that is open to the world. For the Church does not exist for itself but in order to be "a sacramental sign and an instrument of intimate union with God and of the unity of all humankind" (*Lumen Gentium* 1). The Church, then, as sign and instrument must both symbolize and strive for "the unity of all humankind" with one another and with God. This promotion of unity, the Council affirms, "belongs to the inmost nature of the Church" (*Gaudium et Spes* 42). The task of the priest cannot, therefore, be limited to building closed and self-satisfied Christian communities, but must reach out to the creation of the eschatological human community (the new heavens and the new earth) which lies on the horizons of human and cosmic history (Rev 21:1-4).

In India today, then, the priest must be a community builder, whose concerns reach beyond the minuscule Christian community to which he belongs. He is called to represent, that is, to make present here and now, the one priesthood of Jesus through which all things have been reconciled to the Father. His concerns must be as large as the concerns of Jesus himself. But Jesus came not just to rescue a few individuals from this 'vale of tears', not just to give sight to a pair of blind people or heal a few sick. He came to destroy the

rule of Satan (of structured evil) and establish the reign of God. This is the true meaning of his priesthood, which was a priesthood not of cultic but of historical mediation, that is, a priesthood of self-giving into and in history, which reconciles all things to the Father and leads human and cosmic history to fulfilment. The priest must enter into this movement of the Kingdom which continually subverts a world structured (as was the colonial Roman empire in which Jesus lived, and as is our world today) by relationships of oppression, violence, and exploitation; and replaces it by a new world structured on relationships of respect, freedom and love. Building such communities of the Kingdom (which in India will not be just narrowly institutionally Christian communities) is the primary task of the Christian priest who re-presents the saving priesthood of Jesus. It is to this that all his "priestly" existence, his familiarity with the word, his celebration of the sacraments, his life of dedication must be ordered.

## Priestly Celibacy and the Formation to Celibate Life. III

Carlos Merces DE MELO, S.J.

After outlining last month the historical and the theological dimensions of the law of priestly celibacy, Fr de Melo spells out what this law requires by way of a formation to celibacy. The value of the priesthood and of the celibate life must be appropriately conveyed, affective maturity ensured specially by group living and regular contact with the outside world, including the world of women. Discernment through prayer and spiritual direction are also part of the pedagogy for celibacy.

### III. Formation to the Celibate Life

We now come to the third part of this paper: formation to the celibate life. While dealing with this theme we have continually to keep in mind the *aim* of priestly formation in the Latin Rite and the *means* used to achieve this purpose.

Formation to the priesthood will consist in making each candidate increasingly aware of the greatness and the supernatural character of the priesthood to which he is aspiring, of the values it contains or represents, as well as of the sacrifices and renunciations it demands. In this way he will go on constantly growing in his personal understanding and esteem of his vocation, and so arrive at the human and spiritual maturity required for the priestly ordination. At the same time formation must be geared towards giving the future priest and pastor of souls a certain amount of personal experience of pastoral ministry among the people of God.<sup>1</sup> Formation to celibacy as such is no more than one of the requirements comprised in the training for the priesthood in the Latin Rite. It must not, therefore, be treated in isolation, as if it were an end in itself; it must be harmoniously integrated in the entire programme of preparation for the priestly life. Since this paper deals specifically with celibacy, it is this aspect of the priestly training that we shall now discuss.

1. My first contention is that every candidate to the priesthood should be helped to form a very high idea of the priestly vocation. This will be the fruit of the entire programme and time-table of the seminary, of spiritual direction, the conferences or spiritual talks that are a part of the seminary routine, of selected readings, meditation, prayer, times of retreat and recollection, etc. This is important because unless the seminarian has personally realized this

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1. VATICAN II, *Opt Tot.*, nn. 4, 8, 20; S.C. OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION, *Ratio Fundamentalis*, nn. 44-46.



ideal, he will later not have the strength and persevering generosity needed for the many sacrifices entailed in the priestly life and ministry.

Youth is the time of ardour, idealism, generosity. A seminarian has to be enthusiastic about his vocation. He must get used to see in it a sure sign of God's predilection for him, for it is a call to carry out in the midst of his fellow brothers and sisters that very work and mission which the Father entrusted to His Son on earth. Could there be anything more sublime and more heart-filling?

Through His gracious initiative God invites those whom He chooses for this mission to a personal response to His call, a firm decision and a generous effort and cooperation with those whom the Church has selected for the formation of future priests. Such a firm decision supported by deep personal convictions will be the solid basis of a new life centred on Jesus, the Saviour of the human race, and tuned to the vision made known by the Lord in the Gospel. It will give the candidate the right motivation and courage not to succumb to temptations and contrary attractions, and to persevere joyfully in his noble intent.

2. Together with understanding of and commitment to the priestly vocation in general, the young aspirant to the priesthood must more in particular be able to appreciate the *value of celibacy itself* and the role it plays in his life and ministry and its inner congruence with the priestly ideal (cf. Part II). He will then welcome and accept the law of celibacy not just as a Church prescription, unrealistic, unjust or arbitrary, as it is often made out to be, but as a way of life conatural to those called to incarnate Christ's priesthood among the people of his time and his country or place of work. He will welcome wholeheartedly what Pope Paul VI teaches in his Encyclical on *Priestly Celibacy*:

To them (those called) this is the mystery of the newness of Christ, of all that He is and stands for; it is the sum of the highest ideals of the Gospel and of the Kingdom; it is a particular manifestation of grace, which springs from the Paschal mystery of the Saviour. This is what makes the choice of celibacy desirable and worthwhile to those called by our Lord Jesus. Thus they intend not only to participate in his priestly office, but also to share with Him His very condition of living. . . . (n.25)

The response to the divine call is an answer of love to the love which Christ has shown us so sublimely (cf. Jn 3:6; 15:13). This response is included in the mystery of the special love for souls who have accepted His most urgent appeals (cf. Mk 10:21). With a divine force, grace increases the longings of love. And love, when it is genuine, is all-embracing, stable and lasting, an irresistible spur to all forms of heroism. And so the free choice of sacred celibacy has always been considered by the Church "as a symbol of, and stimulus to charity" (LG n.42): it signifies a love without reservations; it stimulates to a charity which is open to all (n.24).

In this way, the bond between priesthood and celibacy will more and more be seen as closely knit as the mark of a heroic soul and the imperative call to unique total love for Christ and His Church (n.25).

3. However, it is not enough that a candidate accepts celibacy willingly in view of his priestly ideal. He has to grow in his commitment to the celibate life entailed in his vocation till he arrives at the *maturity*, affective and spiritual, required for his ordination in the Latin Rite.<sup>2</sup> Here comes the delicate and crucial problem of *education to chastity*. Here again, we repeat, the attention of the young candidate must not be unilaterally focused on chastity: such a course is not helpful and could even exacerbate the difficulties in this matter. The problem of chastity must be dealt with, as we said, as part of the general formation to the priestly ideal made up of fervour, generosity, trust in God, love and joy.

To begin with, the young candidate must not be left in ignorance of what human sexuality consists in and of the important rôle it plays in our life and in the development of our personality. As Pope John Paul II has often stressed, our sexuality "is a great gift given to us by the Creator"; it is "an enrichment of the whole person - body, emotions and the soul - and it manifests its inmost meaning in leading the person to the gift of self in love." "Virginity or celibacy - he remarks - is the supreme form of the self-giving that constitutes the very meaning of human sexuality."<sup>3</sup>

Consequently, a candidate to the priesthood must not be ignorant of matters sexual, in the degree befitting his age, nor must he have a negative attitude to sex. All that comes from God is clean and beautiful and deserves to be seen with eyes that are pure, with modesty, respect and a sense of wonderment.

Virginal consecration is therefore a sacrifice bordering on the heroic. It implies the life-long renunciation of a triple blessing, the deep-set tendencies implanted in human nature by its Author - the tendency to married love, the tendency to the gratification of the senses which goes with conjugal love (sex) and the tendency to paternity or maternity. These tendencies are healthy in themselves; renouncing them for a whole lifetime may entail a good deal of struggle, intimate annoyance or mortification. The candidate to the priesthood must be aware of this human condition and be fully reconciled with it. At the same time he must be taught how to deal with sexual temptations and difficulties with peace and serenity, with good humour and without getting panicky about it. There can be no question of repressing the instinct but of integrating it as something positive in one's overall concern for and endeavour towards human and Christian perfection.

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2. S.C. OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION, *Guide to Formation to Priestly Celibacy*, Rome, 1974, p.20, no.18: "Concept of Human Maturity."

3. JOHN PAUL II, *Enc. Letter Familiaris Consortio*, no.37

Such an integration supposes, of course, the habit of self-control, discipline, application to duty, hard work, silence, prayer. If marriage is indeed a beautiful vocation, voluntary chastity embraced for the sake of Christ and the Kingdom is a still more lofty and appealing ideal for those called to it. It means victory over oneself and it brings about the gradual spiritualisation of one's entire being: chastity is a sign that our eternity has already begun on earth.

Looked at in this way, chastity can become a powerful help in our way to God and in our relationship with our brothers and sisters. It can gradually liberate us and give us wings to fly. If we fail to do this, and allow the instinct to get the upper hand, the result can be disastrous! We can lose the right use of reason and become slaves to passion.

4. Speaking of the various means to be employed in the formation of candidates to lifelong celibacy, greater attention is being paid nowadays to the influence of *groups* on the individuals both with regard to the birth of a priestly vocation and its further progress. "In every great age of the Church, the emergence of vocations takes on new forms," the French Bishops declared at the close of their meeting at Lourdes in 1974; "the Spirit of Christ acts in newness." And Agostino Favale, SDB, in an interesting work on vocations<sup>4</sup> states that research made on an international scale leads to the conclusion that the evolution of modern society makes it increasingly difficult to establish with precision the boundary lines between youth and adulthood. So far as formation is concerned the classical analysis of youth psychology is therefore no longer valid for the new spirit that is gaining ground.

In the past recruitment was often done by an appeal to the reason, will and heart of potential candidates, and through pertinent information and data placed at their disposal. They could then at leisure reflect on the matter by themselves before coming to a decision, with the help of their spiritual director. This method was valid in a society that was on the whole stable and uniform - static. Times have changed. Our lot is cast in a new world of which perhaps the most salient characteristic is noise and speed and constant change - a world permanently on the move . . . . Methods of recruitment and formation have consequently to take into account the ability of the new recruits to adjust themselves in a mature way to ever changing situations.

That is to say, together with an appeal to the intellect and will, potential candidates must be helped to grow by being inserted in small, favourable *groups* of boys and girls committed to their faith and endeavouring to live it from within. In such groups through mutual interaction the prospective candidates will be able to assert themselves, to discover themselves in satisfying relationships with others in the experience of the warmth of human

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4. *Vocazione comune e vocazioni specifiche: aspetti biblici, teologici e psico-pedagogico-pastorali*, Rome, LAS, 1981, pp. 507-509.

friendships, by the helps and corrections they receive, and so find the proper balance between repression and right expression and move on to maturity. They will thus also find out what it is that God is asking of them, for God's designs are after all inscribed in the depths of one's personality, one's character, one's qualities, talents, tendencies and attractions, desires and possibilities.

In this way it can be reasonably expected that young men will discover the value of chastity and grow in their appreciation and love of this noble virtue by being correlated with other young people, boys and girls, well grounded in their faith, highly motivated, and animated by an apostolic spirit. Vocations will normally emerge in such an atmosphere of faith, fraternal love and service. In such a milieu they will also come to appreciate the beauty of marriage and married life.

This is said in respect to youth groups before entrance into the seminary; but such a method should continue as well, later, in the houses of formation. For instance, friendships among seminarians must not only not be frowned upon but accepted and fostered, with prudence, for they have a significant role place in their psychological and spiritual growth. We may say in general that a certain amount of freedom is truly helpful, provided there is proper guidance and an atmosphere of openness, loyalty, sincerity and authenticity.

Such relationships can help these youngsters to listen to one another and therefore to listen to God. They can form them to the practice of charity and so prepare them for their future task of builders of Christian communities.

5. The time of *holidays*, when the seminarians spend about two months at home, in their respective dioceses, can be an excellent opportunity for continued contact with the modern world into which as pastors they will be plunged again. But such contact will be conducive to their all-round progress only if the holidays are properly planned and the young seminarians are guided by wise and experienced priests.

During holidays the good friendships the seminarians had formed before they entered the seminary will be further deepened and will continue to be for them a source of legitimate satisfaction and strength in their difficulties, and confirm them in their vocation. This means that teaching and information must not be severed from the factor of interpersonal relationships. One is reminded of a saying of Monsignor Ancel, of Lyons, France, that "a priest who has no friends is generally speaking a priest who is in danger." Desirable human maturity will be the result of such formation under the guidance of superiors and directors who are enlightened in this matter and are truly men of God.

This is also the direction given by the Congregation for Catholic Education. In its document *Educational Guidance in Human Love: Outlines for Sex Education* of 1 November, 1983, "drawn up with the help of educational experts and submitted to wide consultation" (p.3, n.2), the Congregation makes the following statement:

There exists in education a not negligible factor which goes side by side with the action of the family and the school and which frequently has an even greater influence in the formation of the person: the youth groups, constituted in leisure time, which impinge intensely on the life of the adolescent and young adult. The human sciences hold that "groups" are a positive condition of formation, because the maturation of the personality is not possible without efficacious personal relationships (p.25, n.77).

6. It may not be out of place here to say a special word about the *relationship of seminarians with women*, who constitute over one half of the human race. So it would not be realistic or helpful in any way if future priests are brought up as if that one half of humanity did not exist! In this matter I can do no better than give the word to so experienced an observer of human realities as the sociologist Rev. Andrew Greeley. I may be allowed to give extracts from an address he gave to seminarians in the U.S.A.:

Celibacy is not a denial of sex or a repression, but rather a sublimation. We do not get rid of our sexual drives, we channel them to higher purposes. We do not pretend that some women are not very pleasant to talk to. Nor do we pretend that we are immune to the attractions of women. We do not let ourselves become rigid and unfriendly in our dealings with them. We try neither to ignore them nor to spend too much time with them. Obviously, the balance is difficult to achieve and obviously we must be prudent and careful; but because the balance is difficult, we are not thereby permitted to take refuge in oversimplified solutions - in either extreme.

At all times in our dealings with women we must be male. Our style of manliness in our relations with them must be very different from that of their husbands or suitors, but it nevertheless must be authentically male. It must be at all times courteous, chivalrous, respectful, and in some sense, protective. . . . There are simply no good reasons for seminarians getting mixed up in the adolescent romantic game, and I think that most of them are aware of it. The real problem with seminarians is that many of them think they are missing something and would rather like to find out what it is . . . Of course, they are missing something, otherwise there would be no sacrifice in giving it up; but it is hardly necessary to learn in great detail what it is they are missing. They might console themselves with the thought that those who are not in the seminary are missing something too and there is not much to be gained by pondering the chlorophyll content of other people's lawns.

This is not to say that seminarians should avoid girls as if they would carriers of the bubonic plague. I presume you will on occasion converse with your friend's sisters or your sister's friends. I hardly think you will sneak out the side door of the church to avoid saying a few words to some charming young lady who goes to Mass each morning during your vacation. Nor do I imagine that you will desert the apostolic work to which you have been assigned or which you have chosen for your summer work merely because members of the opposite sex happen to be involved in the same projects. Much depends on the circumstances, of course, and one cannot generalize, but I am inclined to think that, provided reserve and intelligence are at work on both sides, the experience a seminarian gains in working on apostolic projects in which girls are involved is very worthwhile. However one must be careful . . .

The quotation has been long but it was worthwhile.<sup>5</sup>

7. I shall only add that *discernment* is required, as well as sufficient acquaintance with the psychological aspects of male-female relationships and

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5. Cf. also *Guide to Formation*. The guide deals with this problem with openness and wisdom in nn. 57 to 61, pp. 49-53.

with the psychology of women. This must be provided by the seminary curriculum. Moreover there must be total openness with one's spiritual director. I take this opportunity to stress the capital importance of the role of *spiritual directors* in seminaries. They must be well chosen and qualified priests, real men of God, and fully devoted to their charges.<sup>6</sup>

8. Coming back to what we said in favour of the formation of small groups, a word of caution may not be out of place here. Such groups must not be allowed to degenerate into little coteries closed in upon themselves, more or less indifferent to the rest of the seminary community. The seminary is a family in which every member of each group forming part of the institution should be open to every other group and to the entire community. Such broad community life can be an admirable help and a providential preparation for the life and ministry to which the seminarian will be called later on as a member of the college of priests, under the bishop of the diocese. He is being prepared to live not as a monk or a hermit but as the father of a Christian community, spending his life close to it and for it, in an attitude of dialogue, and humble, loving service. Accordingly, as the *Guide to Formation in Priestly Celibacy* aptly puts it,

A life filled with brotherly love and harmony, which is industrious and replete with a human and supernatural warmth, irradiates over all a sense of restful calm, equanimity, and deep satisfaction. In this sort of atmosphere students will be, as it were, immunized from the need to seek emotional compensations outside the community. It will be more difficult for them to regret the renunciation which their choice of celibacy has involved.<sup>7</sup>

The following testimony of an experienced priest confirms what has been said above. Speaking at the last Synod of Bishops in Rome, Fr Bonnici, a Maltese priest in charge of the promotion of vocations in his country, said:

Where there is a real and deep communion among priests, where the seminary witnesses to the life of the family of the sons of God, young men are able to see celibacy in a completely new light, not as self-denial and isolation, but as a way of bringing about a more universal family and therefore of exercising an even more fascinating type of fatherhood.<sup>8</sup>

9. Community, communion, yes. Nevertheless, silence and *solitude*, as much a requirement of human nature as the need to love and be loved. It is a

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6. In some doubtful cases the need may be felt of recourse to specialists in view of a more accurate discernment. *The Guide to Formation* says the following: "Educators who themselves are well-prepared for their work should be able to verify the authenticity of vocations in normal individuals by using the usual criteria for vocational discernment. However, when in doubt or when seminary superiors feel that a student needs particular help to decide his vocation, special remedies may be employed, such as a psychological testing before the candidate begins his theological course. Maybe even a specialized psychotherapeutic examination will be found advisable or he may be advised to interrupt his ecclesiastical studies in order to work for a time in some other profession" (p. 36, n. 38).

7. *Guide to Formation*, p. 60, n. 71.

8. *Osserv. Romano*, 22 Oct. 1990, p.9.

central human experience through which we have to pass so as to learn to confer meaning on our own life and face the reality of our existence. It opens our hearts to God, the Absolute, by whom we are made and who alone can fill our hearts with a joy that is lasting and that nobody can take away from us: He has made us for Himself and restless are our hearts till they find rest in Him (St Augustine).

Solitude and a certain experience of loneliness are an aspect of human life that is found even in the happiest married lives; much more so in the life of celibates. It is always in solitude, the *Guide to Formation* tells us, "that the great decisions of life are made. The solitude of priestly celibacy is charged with such values."<sup>9</sup> But it is a grace, for it forces us to direct all our desires towards the One and Triune God who deigns to come and establish His dwelling in the intimate depths of our soul (Jn 14:23). Solitude is therefore a call to a deeper life of prayer and union with God. It is for this close union with God that the future priest has to be trained through the hours of silence, study and prayer that make up the life in the seminary. Incidentally, silence and solitude are in no way opposed to love and communion either with people or with God; properly understood, they can foster communion and intimacy.

10. Last, not least, we need a vigorous life of faith, hope and charity. As we have seen, priestly celibacy is far from being a synonym of loveless life, as some people imagine it to be. On the contrary, it is nothing if not a *love affair*. And so one should never speak of consecrated celibacy or chastity except in terms of love lest it be robbed of its true meaning. For those who are called to it, chastity is love, fulfilment, happiness. There is one thing we refuse to renounce: love - love for Christ, of course, but also love for our brothers and sisters, in whose service we have laid down our lives. Through our consecration, Christ becomes, in a way, our All; he takes the place of everything in our life. To him we give that total, undivided love that married persons give to their partners in life. This is no exaggeration. One of the greatest ascetics of all times, St John Climacus, in his *Scala Paradisi*, suggests that "we must love God as a lover loves his fiancée." And in our own days, Fr Germain Foch, the brother of Marshall Foch (the hero of the First World War), novice master and spiritual director of young Jesuit scholastics in France, used to say that "spiritual life is like a honeymoon or a wedding journey with Jesus," but, he hastened to add, "in a barbarian country." We do not see Jesus. Our act of love is consequently enhanced by continual acts of faith. Consecrated virginity is a word we pledge to God in our youth, in darkness. Here on earth one side of us has to starve, and so, as Karl Rahner pointedly remarked in one of his retreats to priests, we have to learn how "to weep in peace."

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9. *Guide to Formation*, p.43, n. 49.

11. Consecrated celibacy is a life in love. Love however cannot last without prayer. And by "prayer" I mean our daily, regular hours of personal, familiar conversation or interview with God our Father, leading us to a growing familiarity with Him, and thus preparing us to become "contemplatives in action." It is in prayer that, through the action of the Spirit of love, we grow in intimacy with our heavenly Father, with Jesus, and with the Blessed Virgin Mary, our Mother. Fidelity to daily prayer is therefore *a matter of life and death* for a priest, both in view of his own spiritual progress and of his role as the master of prayer of those entrusted to his care. Many of our brother priests who have gone away would acknowledge that the ultimate cause of their decision was the abandonment of prayer.

12. Priestly celibacy can best be understood in this context of faith and love. The sins and shortcomings of her consecrated ministers do sadden the Church, but they do not kill her optimism and her firm faith in God's power and man's fidelity.

One of the reasons why people criticize the Church's stand on this matter is that they reason mainly in terms of nature, whereas the demands made by the law of celibacy take their place within the supernatural perspective that we have recalled and, as Pope Paul reminded us,

they can be brought into clearer light only under the influence of the Holy Spirit, promised by Christ to His followers for the knowledge of things to come (cf Jn 16:13), and to enable the People of God to increase in the understanding of the mystery of Christ and of the Church.<sup>10</sup>

Accordingly, the same Holy Father in his message on the World Day of Prayer for Vocations in 1970, made his mind very clear in this regard:

Access to the priesthood will not be rendered more desirable by being made easier by liberating it, for example, from celibacy, which the Latin Church has regarded as its supreme honour for centuries. The young feel even less attached to a less generous ideal of priestly life. This is not the direction which ought to be taken. The problem of celibacy does not even arise where there is an atmosphere full of prayer, charity, mortification, and the young find it more than natural to consecrate themselves to Christ in full and total readiness for the Kingdom of God.<sup>11</sup>

The Pope repeated the same decision in his encyclical on Celibacy:

Hence we consider that the personal law of celibacy should today continue to be linked to the ecclesiastical ministry. This law should support the minister in his exclusive, definitive and total choice of the unique and supreme love of Christ: it should uphold him in the entire dedication of himself to the public worship of God and the service of the Church; it should distinguish his state of life both among the faithful and in the world at large.<sup>12</sup>

As we saw, the eighth Ordinary World Synod of 1990, which took up expressly the theme of "Priestly Formation," strongly confirmed these views.

10. PAUL VI, Encl. Letter *Sacerdotalis Coelibatus*, n. 18.

11. *The Pope Speaks*, 15 (1970), p. 13.

12. PAUL VI, Encl. Letter *Sacerdotalis Coelibatus*, n. 14.



### Conclusion

As we have tried to show, priestly celibacy is, indeed, a challenging demand, particularly in our time. It is the victory of faith, hope and love, the three theological virtues. It centres our life on God. By maintaining the law in the Latin Rite, in spite of the number of people who change their option and tend to tarnish its image before the world, the Church is inviting the People of God to a stricter selection and discernment in the choice of their future ministers, a more adequate and updated formation in keeping with the times, and a more profound act of faith in the presence of the Spirit of Christ who lives in the Church and can make even impossible things possible (cf. Lk 1:37).

(continued from p. 112)

theologians and the permanent presence of the laity in places of responsibility in the Church. All this cuts on your traditional sphere as a priest. Finally there has been the Lefebvre schism and similar rightist movements with the questioning their voice regarding conciliar developments.

In short, you had to adjust again and again, and your life's self-offering has taken forms you had not foreseen.

I imagine that, like most priests in rural areas, you live alone in the parish house, and that you have to serve other parishes and animate many groups and perhaps assume responsibilities in the diocese.

As a lay woman, allow me to say, and I say this to all priests, "Thank you!" Thanks first and foremost for all that you give to us by listening, for the way you form us through your testimony of patient fidelity, and for your sacramental ministry. I want at the same time to tell you what a profound joy and what a depth of human, spiritual and ecclesial life many lay people derive from sharing with you corresponsibility for the Church. This is also true the other way around: many priests have shared their experience that they were renewed in their ministerial identity by the exercise of such corresponsibility.

Yes, I pray for you and for all overworked priests. I pray specially for the growth and fidelity of this post-conciliar people of God, where all the baptised in Christ live in different and complementary ways the experience of being the Body of Christ in which they are, at the same time, temple of the Holy Spirit.

Yours sincerely,

Monique HEBRARD

## Formation in the Missionary Spirit

Bishop Thomas MENAMPARAMPIL, S.D.B.

The Bishop of Dibrugarh (Bishop's House, Dibrugarh 786001, Assam) shares with the readers of the JOURNAL the reflections he presented to the rectors of Major Seminaries in Asia gathered in Tagaytay, Philippines, in October last year. He stresses that an experience, based formation must include the experience of actual evangelising, i.e., helping people to find God, which can arise only if the Seminary teachers are themselves involved in evangelisation and thus offset the dangers of excessive intellectualism.

**I**N RECENT YEARS there has been a determined effort on the part of everyone concerned to make the seminary truly formative, relevant and adapted to the purpose for which it was constituted. The human sciences, for example, have called for a reorganization of the seminary to allow greater freedom, and more scope for independent thought, creativity and bigger participation in the running of the institution. They have emphasized the importance of human virtues, emotional maturity, healthy relationships, genuine friendship, and the formative presence of the staff members in the lives of the seminarians.

Likewise, a growing awareness of the need for a more generous commitment to the poor has made the seminary give greater attention to the life-style, stress austerity and simplicity of life, plan exposure programmes for seminarians to situations of poverty and involve them in justice-issues of the neighbourhood.

In the same way, the importance that inter-religious dialogue and inculturation have assumed of late has led the seminary staff to introduce the seminarians to the scriptures and the religious traditions of various faiths, to help them to reflection along with persons of other persuasions and to be innovative in decoration and symbolism.

All these very worthy initiatives have contributed a great deal to the renewal of the seminary. But, we may ask, how far has the young priest of today, the product of the seminary, become capable of leading people to God? Whatever else everything is about, this is the central task and everything is calculated to this end, everyone is oriented to this goal. In the drive for intellectual thoroughness, psychological development, cultural insertion, social relevance, what gets often left out is the sense of direction in all these endeavours: to acquire the skill of helping people come to God.

### *Evangelization*

What seems to worry scholars and teachers today is how to define the term "evangelization" and to say or deny that this or that particular activity is

part of evangelization. Whether the activities proposed get done or not is not of great concern. There is not enough anxiety to ensure that whatever is done is done in an evangelical atmosphere, that every step is taken under the inspiration of the Gospel, that the values fostered, attitudes created, relationships built up and the goals proposed are in tune with the central Christian message. *What bewilders one most of all is the manner in which these earth-shaking words of Jesus have been demythologized: "Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28:18-19).* These are words that have been the cause of the birth and growth of churches, and on them we have to fall back for the continued existence and development of communities that believe in the Gospel.

### ***Evangelization as an Experience***

How can we train the seminarian in the skill he needs for leading people to the Father, particularly those who are not aware of the Father's plan for humankind in Jesus Christ? Some sort of radical change must take place in his formation programme: *Evangelization must cease to be merely an idea to be discussed and become an experience to be lived.* And this from the earliest stage of the seminary formation.

Experience has received great emphasis in recent years. The seminarian is often made to live in a situation of privation. He experiences poverty. He is made to involve himself in the struggles of the poor. These are certainly excellent experiences. He is given an experience in teaching, preaching, organizing and helping in the parish during his regency period. (Often a short reluctant one year! It could be two.) While all these efforts are truly wonderful, if he never gets a chance of and never develops a taste for taking someone nearer God, his pastoral experience is incomplete. But once he has developed this taste, his missionary effectiveness is infallible!

This is a path familiar to those who have walked it: to move in companionship with a fellow-pilgrim on the Emmaus way, to share life and thought together until a moment comes when your companion seeks to know the "reasons for your hope."

### ***The Example of the Elders***

Young people can be introduced to such a noble experience only by persons who themselves have had similar experiences. It may be the seminary staff is often selected on the basis of a person's abilities to teach and relate with others. These are, no doubt, excellent criteria. Would it be possible to ensure that at least a proportion of the staff members be persons who have had missionary experience and still delight in leading people to the faith and strengthening the faith of believers? The lecture of a professor who is constant-

ly in touch with persons in search of God will be qualitatively different from that of another professor whose wisdom is confined to the books. Bookish scholarship rejoices over controversies and is often concerned with formulas that do not necessarily correspond to an actual religious experience, and is eager to outsmart someone following a different school of thought. On the contrary, you will find an amazing consensus among persons who deal with the inner pilgrimage. The journey to God is so similar everywhere, no matter what part of the world one comes from! And this is an area where Asians are thought to be experts. Analysing situations, dissecting concepts, comparing and contrasting ideas are lesser tasks, indicative of our present system of training. Valuable as these activities are, they can only serve to point further.

### *Pastoral Experience during Holidays*

The Council Decree *Optatam Totius* already contemplates the possibility of the seminarian being engaged in pastoral tasks during the holidays. It states:

During holidays they (the seminarians) should be introduced to pastoral practice by appropriate programmes. Depending on the age of the seminarians and the local conditions, and given the prudent approval of their bishops, such programmes should be pursued in a methodical way and under the guidance of men experienced in pastoral matters (no.21).

My plea today is that these programmes be truly pastoral (not merely administrative and organizational tasks carried out in a pastoral context), and that they be truly missionary, by which I mean, activities like teaching, preaching, guiding or any sort of *interaction with people where a sharing of faith is possible*. Pietistic as it may sound, this is the main task of the "Man of God" in Asia.

### *Insertion of the Seminary into the Pastoral Effort of the Diocese*

I would also urge that the seminarian has a chance to keep close to such activities during the school year, e.g., week-ends and even on other days as occasion demands. This will not be possible unless the *seminary itself is effectively inserted into the pastoral and missionary effort of the diocese*. As it is, I am tempted to believe that seminaries are powerful intellectual fortresses (I am not asking that they renounce this distinction) that stand in isolation in a world of missionary effort, or are related merely to similar centres. The day the staff and the students of the seminary form part of the missionary team of a missionary diocese, we will have solved the problem. They could play so many complementary roles to strengthen the work of those in the field, e.g., run an enquiry centre, edit a magazine, help conduct specific programmes for the youth, catechists, or other groups, prepare catechetical exhibits, visit homes with a specific purpose, promote any of the programmes launched by the diocese or the local parish. . . . Once the interest is created in the seminarians, there is no limit to possibilities. We are all children of the Father who created the Universe! Creativity is our birthright!

I have emphasized the importance of helping the seminarians to gain experience in the missionary field from their earliest years. Situations in Asia differ considerably so that it is difficult to descend to details. Some seminaries consider it highly educative to allow their seminarians to spend their holidays at home in humble surroundings, so that they do not lose touch with reality and remain capable of adapting to simple life-styles. I know some dioceses in India that place their seminarians in twos and threes in the heart of a village where they learn to witness to their faith in challenging situations. Some of these young men have worked veritable wonders during their seminary days and have emerged as missionary stalwarts in later years

### *Some Suggestions*

Allow me to proceed to certain practical suggestions, leaving you free to judge about relevance to your situations. The seminarians should have the opportunity to meet zealous missionaries in the field. Even a brief sharing with an authentic messenger of Christ, fresh with missionary experience, can stir the hearts and imagination of young people. Young seminarians should be exposed to such personalities as often as it is possible.

The seminarian should be helped to make pastoral use of the word of God. Our present approach to the Scriptures is heavily exegetical. By dissecting the word, there is a danger that one takes the life out of it. Then it is no more a Living Word. It is only the person who has often sought and found solace, guidance and strength in Scriptures that will be able to lead someone else to the same experience. The freshness of the Gospel has a special meaning for us Asians. People sit in silent wonder at the ineffable words that proceed from God's authentic spokesman. Such words penetrate hearts, transform lives and draw people to the path of their ultimate destiny.

Will I sound like recalling some archaic art if I refer to the need of spiritual guidance for the seminarian? I am not speaking of counselling and other forms of valuable psychological helps that a young man stands in need of. I am referring to the more *spiritual guidance in which the assistance sought and received has the unction of the Holy Spirit*. The sharing and helping are in the context of profound faith, and the persons are affected at their deepest level. Can anyone who has never been guided in this manner become a true Guru, who in turn can guide others along the arduous path of the Spirit?

In this context, I would say we are greatly underestimating the spiritual treasures we have inherited from our ancestors in Asia. The Western world today stands in admiration of the spiritual advance that the Eastern societies made in the past. It caused quite a stir when Catherine Doherty introduced some of the traditions of the Eastern Church to the Americas. Taize has adopted many things Oriental into its prayer, with great advantage. Fr Anthony de Mello has interpreted the Oriental masters of the Yoga, Zen and

Vipassana tradition for the western educated audience. His books are near bestsellers in many Christian circles.

(Here I speak of the strength of the eastern tradition in a tone of humility, not claiming any superiority over whatever is of value in the west from which we too have benefited. We should look at the two traditions as each having a contribution of its own to make, both having developed from the unique historic experiences of two different societies. We should be very wary of making any comparison with negative connotations, which is often the result of unhealed memories associated with our colonial past. A time is coming when we shall recognise the unsurpassable wealth of both traditions, which in God's plan are truly complementary.)

### *Dialogue*

"Dialogue" in the East makes sense when it concerns itself with sharing actual God experiences. Lengthy argumentations and efforts for the demonstration of our superiority just show poor taste to our brothers and sisters of other religions. But if "dialogue" could be conducted in an atmosphere of serenity, prayer, mutual respect and genuine marvel at the wonder that God is, then it would bear abundant fruit! The late Fr Amalorpavadass used to hold dialogue sessions at his Anjali Ashram, Mysore, which consisted in reading from the Hindu Scriptures and the Bible on a particular theme, singing bhajans, sharing thoughts in a most fraternal atmosphere and praying together. There was neither comparisons nor contrasts made between the tenets of the two religions, but there was a growth in the awareness of God and in family sense.

Zeal in the proclamation of the Gospel does not take away our openness to person of other religions. Jesus' message can be worthily proclaimed only in the atmosphere of dialogue and respect for people and their personal convictions. There is more wealth in various religious traditions of Asia than the outsider perceives. A seminarian will be better equipped for his mission if he is a familiar with the sacred books and religious practices of the community he is going to work with. His ultimate strength will be the religious insight he has acquired and the inner authenticity he has built up. What persons of other faiths admire most is not the superiority of our teaching, but the genuineness of our convictions and the consequent quality of the lives we lead.

### *Relationship with the Laity*

Though it may look a marginal point, I would like at this stage to make a brief reference to developing in the seminarian a genuine respect for the laity, and an ability to work with them. In actual life this is central. The lay people are not just persons to be looked after. They are not merely objects of evangelization. They are evangelizers in their own right. They are active helpers in that noble task. They are brothers, sisters, friends, effective

coworkers. So much of missionary potential is wasted when the talents of the laity are not drawn into the service of the Gospel. *Every Christian is a missionary. It is the whole community that evangelizes.* If the young seminarian grows up with this notion clear in his mind, he will be equipped to win a hundred thousand hands to assist him. Those missions are flourishing in which the clergy and the laity collaborate closely.

Being young, the seminarian is in a position to stir young people to action. This is a skill that will stand him in good stead in later years too. The youth between 18 and 25 have played an innovative role, for good or for evil, in every age of human history. Every revolutionary movement relied heavily on them. If their energy could be brought to the service of God's Good News, you could change the world. The seminary days and the time of regency are periods for developing the skill of winning the confidence of the youth.

### *Inculturation*

There is much discussion these days on "inculturation" in the context of evangelization. I would like to emphasise a form of inculturation that goes beyond the perfect mastery of the local language, and means something more than the knowledge of the history and tradition of a particular people and the adaptation of their cultural forms into liturgy and Church life. The type of inculturation I am referring to has to do with the *discovery of the inner genius of a community and the ability to enter into dialogue with the collective soul of that community, always learning, constantly adapting to mentalities, never giving up the effort to have a deeper insight into its inner identity.* Such a form of inculturation is an absolute necessity when the young priest belongs to another ethnic group than the one he serves. However, it is necessary for everyone in ministry. As individuals have their psychological make-up, so do communities. It is ignoring this reality and forgetting the collective hurts of parish-communities or ethnic groups that have often landed the young apostle into major troubles, or have rendered his work ineffective. We Asians are so much community conscious (of caste, tribe or ethnic group), that *it is very important that we develop transcultural perceptions while doing transcultural services.* The young seminarian, living together with companions of other ethnic groups, must learn to be open to other cultures and adapt himself to different characters and attitudes to life. He must be prepared to make himself one with the people he is going to serve. Here I am referring to an inner identification that is hardly definable, which made Paul say, "I made myself a Jew to the Jews, to win the Jews. . . . For the weak I made myself weak. I made myself all things to all to save some at any cost" (1 Cor 9:20-22).

It is for this reason that in the Asian context a social analysis that is purely economy-based does not provide adequate data for effective social action. Caste, creed, community, tribe, linguistic group . . . these identities weigh so

heavily with us, as to make purely economic criteria relatively insignificant. That is one reason why some of our social action groups on this continent have achieved very limited success. They have been using a social instrument imported from Latin America!

The young seminarian would profitably exercise his mind in the study of cultural and ethnic realities and learn to inculturate himself (more accurately, incarnate himself) into Asia's differing ethnic contexts.

### Conclusion

Let us come back to the central message once again. Asia is a land where contemplation is held in high regard. The seminarian will be moving along the right path if he explores the paths to God and becomes an expert in the area of God realization. It will be such a person that will radiate inner serenity, inspire confidence, heal broken relationships, bring peace and joy, and become a powerful force for the announcement of the Gospel. He becomes the "Universal Brother" of whom *Redemptoris Missio* speaks. We look forward to such men from our seminaries.

May be I will end this sharing with two passages from *Redemptoris Missio*: "We cannot preach conversion, unless we ourselves are converted anew every day" (no.4). Why do we at times find it so hard to speak of conversion? What makes us so hesitant? Why are our words often so unconvincing? "People today put more trust in witnesses than in teachers, in experience than in teaching, and in life and action than in theories" (no.42). We may apply this message to our present context. Would we like our seminarians to be zealous missionaries? Let them see excellent examples in their elders. We cannot expect the next generation to be doing what they have not seen done by their formators and their religious superiors. If they see their seminary staff only wrestling with ideas and never instructing a catechumen or befriending a prospective enquirer, they will continue the same tradition. If they see their bishops only inaugurating seminars and blessing convents but never visiting a slum or staying overnight in a village, they know what they should look forward to.

Jesus washed the feet of his disciples before he asked them to do the same to one another. All of us need to remember all the time that we are not at the service of structures and organizations, but we are constantly at the service of human beings who are in search of the Ultimate. Would that they find assistance in us! Make sure, then, that they will find assistance in our younger brothers, in due course.



# Readers' Forum

## Needed: A Fresh Awareness of Reality

J. L. GNANARETHINAM, S.J.

These reflections are the reaction of one who is "in the field," on two important articles of R.C. Heredia S.J., "Towards an Ecological Consciousness: Religious, Ethical and Spiritual Perspectives," published in September and October 1991, in the *Vidyajyoti Journal*. The author is Pastor-in-Charge, R.C. Church, Kelambakkam 603 103, Tamilnadu.

**M**ANY people in the field have been suspicious of people raising the ecological problem and quite a few still are! They see it as a middle-class concern and a distraction from the basic agenda of the working masses. But it should be clear to anybody today that this is no more a luxury concern of armchair ecologists alone, but a matter of survival first of all for the poor masses and the poor countries. Poor rural people are the first victims of floods and droughts caused by ecological imbalances and of the poisoning of water resources by industrial wastes and agricultural chemicals. They are the first to be hit by the biomass-related projects that provide food, fodder, fertilizers and building materials. Among them, the women are hit most, as they are traditionally involved in the provision of water, fuel, food and fodder for the home.

Ecology is the science which studies animal and plant systems in relation to their environment, with particular emphasis on the interrelations and interdependence between different life forms.<sup>1</sup> An ecosystem is a complex totality of communities of life (animals, plants, fungi, bacteria and other micro-organisms) in a particular environment. The 'human species' has in the course of time developed socio-systems which interfere with ever greater power in the complex balance of the ecosystems. Having equipped itself with modern science and technology and growing in members and being committed to economic growth, the human race places an ever increasing burden on ecosystems which have to sustain the continuation of life on our planet.

Ecology as a discipline differs from the scientific approach which isolates particular objects. Its concern is rather to find out how things are connected; it teaches us that no species can survive on its own: all species have to be represented in the Ark of survival.

In the first part of his essay, Heredia exposes the various environmental, ecological and green movements in vogue today and finds fault with them; he also finds inadequate the various religious approaches and judges them partial and misleading, though collectively pointing out to a cosmo-theandric

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1. Porritt JONATHAN, *Seeing Green. The Politics of Ecology Explained* (Oxford 1984), p.3.

perspective, where, as in Panikkar's vision, human fellowship, cosmic evolution and a divine indwelling make up the integrated vision of a total reality. Here is where the hitch comes in. Panikkar proposed this theory seventeen years ago, though he still makes an occasional 'contribution' to the subject in question. Without questioning the intellectual acumen of Panikkar, one can pose the question: Is Panikkar's understanding a panacea for the totality of the problems concerning ecology? Can there not be a better understanding? By citing Panikkar continuously (eight times!) at the end of the first part of his essay, Heredia seems almost to ram down our throats Panikkar's cosmic elixir.

In the second part of the essay Heredia makes a critique of the ethical commitments and spells out their cosmotheandric implications in terms of human rights and cosmic duties in a new social paradigm. Readers of the *Vidyajyoti Journal* must be thankful to the author for having presented such a wonderful synthesis of eco-spirituality in such a dynamic fashion and this essay will certainly be a source of reference on this subject for years to come. But then there seems to be certain inherent weaknesses in this cosmotheandric speculation . . . I shall just point out a few glaring ones, with a view to make Heredia's synthesis more valid and up-to-date.

I am not competent to speak about the spirituality of Francis of Assisi; but I can certainly speak about and for Ignatius of Loyola. On page 583 Heredia remarks that "Ignatius of Loyola is less obviously associated with ecology." Nothing could be farther from reality! Ignatius has a holistic approach to the world which has no meaning in itself. It is a mediation between God and the human person. It is transparent, symbolic, so that in it we can find God. It is an expression of God's love for humanity. One of the beautiful refrains of Ignatius which runs through most of his writings especially in the *Spiritual Exercises* and the *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* is that we are not outside spectators of the cosmos or the universe; we are in it and part of it. Thus in the first Week of the *Exercises*, in his severe meditation on Hell, Ignatius recommends that we *feel* the squalor, the burning and heat of the place. Again in the homely meditation on the Nativity, in the second Week, Ignatius wants us to become one with the Holy Family, the environment of the manger, with the stall of animals, etc., and see in what way we can be of help to them. For Ignatius, history is an interplay of freedoms, the freedom of God and the freedom of the human person in the cosmos and its environment.

This brings us to the final part of our critical observation. One of the underlying weaknesses of Heredia's exposé, is that he takes a sort of an *outsider's* attitude to the whole problem and the series of questions raised. He himself sums up in page 586: "The most compelling image of our space age world is the one of our planet earth seen from the outer space... It is the image of our beautiful and fragile blue sphere floating precariously in the darkness of empty space." This is the flaw. Any amount of theorizing will lead us

nowhere unless we are in the problem and immersed in it. The various aspects of the struggle for a sustainable society in India by the various ecological movements are beautifully summarized by Bastian Wielenga.<sup>2</sup> In a way of speaking, our whole approach to ecology and environmental problems needs a shift to a new paradigm. It may not be out of place to refer to another beautiful source for this question: *A New Vision of Reality* by Bede Griffiths (1990). This is a sort of counterbalance to Heredia's apparent attitudinal allergy to experimental science! In this major new work Griffiths invites us to look afresh at Christianity in the context of modern physics, biotechnology and morphogenesis on the one hand and the Oriental tradition of interpreting the cosmos, on the other. Scientists of international repute like Rupert Sheldrake of the Cambridge University and Fritjof Capra, author of *The Tao of Physics* (1975) and *The Turning Point* (1982), are solidly behind Bede Griffiths in his new wholistic approach to environment. This new (insiders') view of the universe relates not only to physics and biology, but also to medicine, psychology, sociology and economics.<sup>3</sup>

To explain the insiders' ecological attitude, there is a very interesting story taken from Tamil mythological tradition, probably derived from the Chinese tradition of an earlier date, now prevalent now the Tamilnadu dalits. It is called *Karaihal* (Dissolving):<sup>4</sup>

Long long ago, in an area unsullied by industrial revolution, there was a beautiful village in the centre of which there was sacred tank about four metres square. This tank was the only source of drinking water for the whole village as it had a perennial spring; and it was forbidden by tradition to enter into this tank. But the curiosity of a young dalit got the better of him, and he jumped into the tank. As soon as he did so, the quicksands of the tank began to suck him in and he was slowly drowning. None of the onlookers dared to help him since they did not want to break the law of tradition neither did they want to touch the dalit outcaste. Then came a man who was entirely made of salt. He boldly jumped into the tank and tried to reach out to the drowning man. The whirlpool caused by the quicksands began to work on him and he slowly began to get dissolved. The more he tried to reach out to the man in distress, the more he dissolved and finally, by the time the salt-man reached out and caught hold of the drowning man's hand, he was almost fully dissolved. The drowning dalit felt just a pinch of salt in the palm of his hand, by which the salt-man was gripping him . . . Then, the strangest thing happened: the drowning dalit

2. Bastian WIELENGA (1991) in *Social Movements. Towards a Perspective*, ed. by John DESROCHERS *et alii*, Bangalore, Centre for Social Action, 1991, pp. 74-120.

3. Bede GRIFFITHS, *A New Vision of Reality* (Western Science, Eastern Mystic and Christian Faith), Springfield, IL, Templegate, 1990, p.9.

4. S.R. EUGENE, S.J., *Karaihal - An Existential Approach to Theopraxis*, Komanagar, Jesuit Rural Theologiate, Arulgram II (mimeographed) 1991.

began to float, because the density of the water in the small tank had increased! As the dazzled young dalit stepped out of the tank he found himself a transformed person, for most of the salt of the dissolved man was now sticking to him. He resolutely walked ahead, with a new vision of and mission in life - that of the salt-man.

The salt-man was an ecologist!

## What We Need Are Witnesses . . . .

Dear Father,

After reading the article of Fr Paul Caspersz, S.J. on the Catholic Church and Economic Order (cf. *VJTR*, April 1991, pp. 177-186), I felt that I could share my reflections with the readers of VIDYAJYOTI.

Fr Paul Caspersz has underlined the reasons for the reluctance of the Asian Bishops to engage in social analysis to make the Church in Asia the Church of the Asian poor. He has mentioned the comments made by a Buddhist who was shown a draft of his article. The Buddhist friend said that "the fact is, there is a vast difference between religious leaders and the people. As far as Jesus is concerned, he lived and identified with the poor. So he felt everything that the people felt."

It is not only the Asian Bishops that are reluctant to analyse the social realities especially poverty in Asian countries; also the NGO Religious Institutes, Seminaries and Formation Houses, and charitable Institutions (all within the Catholic Church) are not willing to analyse seriously their life-styles in relation to the larger society within which they exist and function because it would involve a radical and profound transformation.

My belief is that actions speak louder than words. In Sri Lanka and in other Asian countries, what we need are witnesses who identify themselves with the people. Identifying with the poor is not an easy task. Many of the persons living and working in the above-mentioned Institutions have been uprooted from the situation of poverty and are now living reasonably comfortable lives. Most of the Institutions are themselves dependent on foreign financial assistance.

Take for example the life of the Catholic Church in Sri Lanka or in other Asian countries. Can the clergy depend on the parishioners for their sustenance? The priests working in parishes are requested to appeal to their parishioners to support the pastors who serve them. In some parishes the Catholics, even those who eke out an existence with their daily toil, do support their priests. But even these Catholics are now beginning to become aware of the financial assistance the Catholic Church receives from outside. So now they are becoming dependent on their pastors/parishes for their livelihood and development.

What we need are examples, witnesses. . . . Can we launch out into the deep to rely on our resources and/or those of our parishioners? When the people feel that their pastors are living and working for/with them, then they will support them. It is with the poor that we should decide whether to obtain financial assistance from outside and how much that should be, and secondly whether we can use such financial support meaningfully and effectively for the development of the poor. This demands new relationships and community structures. Before we can think of a Church of the poor in Asia, will it be possible to work towards the making of a Church of the PEOPLE in Asia? The ideal is the challenge to live interdependently with the people.

Therefore not only the Bishops of Asia but also the other above-mentioned Institutions within the Church need to engage in an analysis of their life-styles in order to move from a state of independence (vis-a-vis the poor of Asia) to a situation of interdependence with the poor. This demands that all the Catholics take a responsibility for their lives and at the same time realise the meaning and value of the relationships that will surely emerge from such an exercise.

Oblate Scholasticate  
Ampitiya, Sri Lanka

Fr Emmanuel FERNANDO, OMI

## Universally Unique and Uniquely Universal

Dear Sir,

The above captioned article of Fr Subhash Anand (VJTR July 1991) begins in the first part as a veritable *cri du coeur*, and ends in the second as an *apologia*. The *cri du coeur* expresses the anguish of a pastor and an evangelist; the *apologia* strengthens the faith of the believer. But neither fosters the true goals of dialogue.

The basic tenet of Fr S.A. that "Jesus Christ is that gift of God to humanity which is uniquely universal and universally unique" (p.417) will prove, it seems to me, to be the fundamental obstacle to authentic dialogue. How can one dialogue with a Buddhist, or a Vedantic Hindu, when one's basic presuppositions, "God", "Christ", "universal and unique Gift", are terms which are not accepted by all? If, further, one considers the problem of religious language, one is faced with an even more serious predicament. For, all language even about God is a meaning we assign to objects and not a replica or encapsulation of a reality out there. There is no truth or reality independently of the meaning we (whether as individuals or through our culture) assign in our linguistic signs and symbols. There is no pre-established and guaranteed correspondence between text and cosmic reality. And whereas once human language was thought of as following or copying a divine and cosmic Logos,

now the linguistic sign has come to be seen as human, conventional, differential and historically changing. This applies as much to science as to theology. To subscribe, therefore, to this tenet of Fr S.A. and to make it a plank of dialogue is to attempt to promote unjustifiably the hegemony of Christianity over other religions, which will understandably be resisted.

On the other hand, the articles by Fr R. DeSmet and Fr J. Vattanky (VJTR, August 1991) and the review of interreligious dialogue over the past two decades by Archbishop Angelo Fernandes (VJTR, October 1991) point out to more viable ways of dialogue.

Fr R. DeSmet sees the interaction between religions as expressing itself in a "concern for whatever favours the liberation of humanity from ignorance and error, selfishness and sin, oppression and all kinds of alienation." (One might find it difficult, though, from the point of view of language analysis, to accept that "there is a 'mysterious teleguidance'" (by no one lesser than the Holy Spirit.) Fr John Vattanky, on the other hand, has tried to convey in his scholarly article that a dialogue at the level of ideas is possible, when he shows how Nyaya philosophy's concern for meaning has to be pressed into the service of a Christian theology. Here, he meets the requirements of the philosophy of language in stressing meaning over dogmatic pronouncements.

Finally, Archbishop Angelo Fernandes in his "Dialogue in the Context of Asian Realities" has perceptively observed that "the fruits of the Spirit should be our constant guides in discerning the presence of the Spirit . . . (which may be discerned) in situations where people come together to build human communities based on love and justice"; and has listed "universal human values as being the point of departure of future encounters of religions."

As a non-professional student of theology with little leisure for systematic study, being a busy pastor in a very large city parish, I humbly propose an opinion less in criticism than with a view to seeking guidance. Noting the views of the three authors listed above, and following the approach of textual analysis or the philosophy of language (Wittgenstein, *et alii*), it seems to me that all dialogue can best be conducted at the level of ethical behaviour, just as all talk of God is meaningless apart from its ethical resonance. Put simply, the acceptance of a change or modification in ethical behaviour will bring about more readily a change or modification in one's belief-system or religious language (meaning-system), and rarely *vice versa*. That is why, also, as Fr George Soares-Prabhu rightly points out in another context (*Bread and Breath*, Theological Essays in honour of Fr Samuel Rayan, S.J.), true inculturation can only come from conversion, in the Biblical sense. Proselytization, it is to be understood, must not be the hidden agenda in dialogue.

Dogmatism, pretension to possess absolute truth, and superciliousness of any sort (on both sides) can have no place in any meaningful dialogue between religions. It has been remarked that even the major doctrinal affirmations

about Christ fill out, in the exegesis given by St Paul in his epistles, the human ethical content of the religious life. For example, his talk of the risen Christ flows straight into talk of the risen life of the Christian: "We seem to have turned faith's language about Christ into a chain of supernatural dogmas. They then become matters of intellectual controversy, and they die as religion because they are no longer directly lived. We have lost the skill of using the symbolic apparatus of religion ethically" (DON CUPPITT: *The Long-legged Fly*, Appendix 2). From this point of view, Fr Subhash Anand's attempted dialogue seems a non-starter. Of course, I seek enlightenment!

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Fr Denis G. PEREIRA

## Letter to a Troubled Priest

Thank you!

In the context of the theme of this issue we share with our readers a Letter that appeared some time ago in *La Croix* and in *Catalunya cristiana*.

I don't know you. But ever since you wrote to me, "Pray for priests living in anxiety and aging before time . . .," I think of you. We had agreed to meet Sunday evening and you did not come. Next day I received your apology, explaining your commitments for that afternoon that took longer than expected, and your work the whole day, your journeys between parish house and diocesan headquarters, the afternoon meeting and the recollection you had to prepare for the following day's convention of vocation promoters and which was not yet ready . . . You ended: "I don't know how I live nowadays."

A few days ago a bishop told me that one of his priests found himself at 1 p.m. on Christmas day without having eaten anything, having said five masses, and alone. He added: "This happens oftener than you may think."

You are now probably middle-age, nearing the sixties. I imagine that you offered your life to God in the priestly ministry around the time of the Council, when the Church was still at peace and the priests were many. After that you went through a series of ecclesial earthquakes: the Council, the departure of many of your companions from the nineteen-sixties onwards, the criticism of clericalism (precisely when you were losing your social position and much of your influence), the emergence of activist groups, and, later, the flood of charismatics, the rejection and the rediscovery of the sacred, the coming of lay

(continued on p. 98)

# Book Reviews

## The Poor

**The Bible, The Church, and the Poor.** By Clodovis BOFF and George J. PIXLEY. Maryknoll, N.Y., Orbis Books, 1989. pp. xviii-266. ISBN 0-88344-6146.

The book is a comprehensive analysis of the meaning and implications of "the preferential option for the poor." The concept is analysed under three aspects: biblical, theological and pastoral. It shows how the God of the Bible, through the prophets and finally through the incarnation of the Son of God, made a preferential option for the poor. It then examines the preferential option in Christian tradition, the pastoral demands made by this option and the difficulty Christian institutions have in responding to them.

The book has valuable insights into Scripture. One such is the struggle that went on in Israel between Deuteronomic theology and the official theology of Jerusalem on the situation of the monarchy. The official theology of Jerusalem, as we know it from the Psalms, held that when Yahweh chose David, he chose him and his descendants forever. On the other hand, the Deuteronomic history or tradition re-evaluates these unconditional promises and makes the continuance of the Davidic dynasty conditional on the kings' obeying the Mosaic law in which justice to the oppressed figures prominently.

In another insight, the book shows how St Paul's concentration on God's action in Jesus Christ made him blind to poverty as a social fact. For him, true poverty is anthropological, inherent in the human condition.

The presentation is scholarly and lucid. It brings together in a coherent reflection many lines of liberation theology. Troubling in its candidness, yet it is enormously reassuring as it builds up the conviction that the poor are an organising principle for our common faith and common life.

J. MISQUITTA, S.J.

**La cause des pauvres. Société, éthique et foi.** By Alan DURAND. Paris, Editions du Cerf 1991. pp. 179. FF 110. ISBN 2-204-04390-7.

Readers of VJTR will probably remember the fine article of Fr A. Durand, translated and published in the November issue of 1989, on "Relating to the Poor as a Constitutive Element of Faith." Many found it enlightening for their social commitment and enriching for their faith. In this book the author has enlarged the ideas proposed in that article and given us a theology of the preferential option for the poor that should be foundational for any authentic liberation theology. The first part of the book offers factual information about the poor in France and in the Third World, stressing that behind the statistics there are always specific faces of men and women, and touching stories of suffering and joys. The second part broadens the theological perspectives sketched in the article. The author notes that we need a double relationship to the poor: a short-term one, personal, of the heart, a contact with the concrete flesh of human suffering, which expresses itself in compassion; and the other an indirect one, professional, political, concerned with curing the structural causes of poverty. Both aspects of the relationship are important and neither can



be omitted, even if some specific vocations in the Church will stress more one or the other; but in no case should they ignore the alternative form. The theological perspectives lead to a special chapter on the theology of creation in relation to the poor.

The third part of the book develops the ethical dimensions of the issue: the earth is for all peoples, and hence human solidarity is the only viable form of existence, and the poor may exercise their rights to the goods of the earth in case of extreme need. The practical orientations are summed up in the following ten *sūtras* each of which is explained at length. 1. The social and economic activity must be evaluated from the perspective of the poor. 2. Our choices in matters economic and social must primarily aim at the satisfaction of the essential needs of the poor. 3. Solidarity with the poor can be lived in many ways, but it must not be reduced to 'working for them' - one must also 'work with them'. 4. The priority given to the poor implies that we do everything possible that their voice be heard and their point of view respected. 5. We must act as often as necessary whenever we hear of plans or observe behaviour that hurt the dignity of the poor. 6. We must examine our style of life from the perspective of the extreme needs of the poor. 7. We must create new forms of loans and gifts (which generally are just acts of strict justice) that primarily enable the poor to take the responsibility for their own development. 8. It is our duty to support and undertake forms of political and social activity that not only aim at diminishing the effects of poverty near or far, but also seek a more radical fight against the causes of poverty. 9. Since the major problem of our time is the poverty of the Third World, we must constantly question ourselves about the effects of our life-styles in other countries and we must derive thence consequences for the direction of our activity to support all efforts made to make international relations less unjust. 10. The acceptance of want in our own flesh through

the practice of fast traditionally linked with the practice of almsgiving may help at least some people to create a spiritual desire for an authentic communion with the poor.

Although addressed primarily to the First World, the book contains a solid theology based on the Bible and patristic teaching and very practical suggestions useful for all. An English translation would be most welcome.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

### Where Religions Meet

*As We Are One. Essays and Poems in Honour of Bede Griffiths.* Ed. by Beatrice BRUTEAU. Philosophers' Exchange, 3425 Forest Lane, Pfafftown, NC 27040, USA, 1991. pp. xxii-232-9.

The poems and essays of this Festschrift "are offered to Dom Bede Griffiths in recognition of his significant contribution to interreligious dialogue and the emergence of a new vision of the world" says the artistic dedication page (v) after quoting Śvetasvatara Upaniṣad 3.8. The book is a work of love and art presented to Dom Bede on the occasion of his visit to the USA in mid-1991. It is produced 'by hand' and reproduced photographically in this first edition, to be probably enlarged and reprinted (p. xxii). Each page is framed by a repeated devanagari quotation of Gita 9.29, inconveniently doing away with running heads. There is at the end, under separate pagination, a very useful bibliography of the 8 books and 145 articles published by Dom Bede in 36 different journals and 8 volumes, and the 13 studies about him.

The twelve contributors to the volume are from the West except for R. Parikkar who himself represents a bridge between East and West. This is what Dom Bede has been since he came to India in 1955 and lived in the Ashirvanam, Kurusimala and Shantivanam monasteries successively, as Wayne Teasdale relates in the 26-page in-

roduction. Panikkar shows how good theology needs a good cosmology and cannot dispense with myth. There are always problems when theological reflection is made to rest on cosmologies of other ages. Odette Baumer-Despaigne offers a very interesting "Vedantic" Meditation on the Our Father, using mostly the words of Abhishiktananda: starting from the Amen and the prayer to be delivered from evil, she works her way up in an inverted order through the concerns about society and God's Kingdom to God's name, and to the ultimate word, Our Father, which itself leads us to a last stage of silence, beyond all words. Thus the prayer becomes "a way of initiation." Paul Knitter gives a short summary of his pluralistic faith. There are other studies on spirituality, mysticism and metaphysics, the longest being a 50-page article by Teasdale on the relation between Christianity and Asian religions and an essay by the editor, also 50-page long, on "Communitarian Non-Dualism" which tries to discover in authentic Trinitarian metaphysics of the person the root of the non-dualistic character of reality and of our communitarian vocation.

All in all, a Festschrift unified in character and worthy of the Guru of Shantivanam.

G. GISPert-SAUCH, S.J.

Sagesse hindoue, mystique chrétienne. By Henri LE SAUX. Nouvelle édition. Paris, Centurion 1991. pp. 271. FF 149. ISBN 2-227-36304-5.

The first edition of this book was written before Vatican II, in 1961-2, as a result of a paper on Sri Ramana Maharshi presented at the ecumenical conversations at Rajpur, organised by Dr Cuttar. The book was published only in 1965 and presented by Fr P. Fallon in *The Clergy Monthly Supplement* 8 (1966-7) 215-6 as probably destined to become "a classic of Christian Indian spirituality." The prophecy

was fulfilled. In the early seventies, before his death, Swami Abhishiktananda, to give him his Indian name, worked hard at the English edition of the text with a fair amount of corrections. This was published by the ISPCCK of Delhi in 1974 with the title *Saccidananda*, within a year of the death of the author (see review in *The Clergy Monthly* 38 [1974] 509-10). A second edition of the English version came out in 1984, and was reprinted in 1990, which besides making a few stylistic corrections reintroduced into the text the appendices of the French edition - the hymn *Vande Saccidanandam* with a commentary, and a few pages of Sri Ramana's Hymns to Arunacala. It also included as another appendix the introduction of the French edition (a new introduction had been written by the Swamiji for the English edition) but it omitted its additional notes.

The preparation of the second French edition was a delicate task. It was necessary to keep the text of the Swami, but also to express his thought as he wanted it expressed at the end of his life, when he himself criticised strongly certain aspects of his first edition. Hence the changes introduced by him in the English edition had to be reflected in the new French text which however had to remain the text of Swamiji. A literary surgery was needed to make the new text conform to the mind of the author in 1973. It has been successfully performed with much care and love by Madame Odette Baumer-Despaigne, one of the most intimate friends of the Swami. The Introduction of the new edition is a French translation of Swamiji's introduction to the English text, but the basic ideas of the original French introduction, including its notes, have been kept in an Appendix. The commentary on *Vande Saccidanandam*, on the other hand, has been omitted as "dated," although the text of the hymn in its French translation is kept. The glossary has been kept and enlarged, with its spellings made more "scientifically" accurate.

Perhaps the change in the general orientation between the first and the second edition is suggested by the new subtitle. While the 1965 book explained the title as "du Vedānta à la Trinité," the 1974 and the present text write simply "A Christian Approach to Advaita Experience." Gone are the remnants of the fulfilment theology, the stress being on a dialogal theology. This may explain the other changes introduced in the 1974 and later editions.

But the basic content of the book remains the same and constitutes not only for India but for the world at large an important spiritual and theological source. Scholars will be happy to have this second French edition and doctoral researchers will surely compare the text of the two editions and comment on and explain the changes as reflecting the evolution of the spirituality and the theology of the Hindu-Christian monk of Uttarkashi.

G. GISPert-SAUCH, S.J.

**The Guru in Indian Catholicism. Ambiguity or Opportunity of Inculturation?** By Catherine CORNILLE. Louvain, Peters Press/W.B. Eerdmans (Louvain Theological & Pastoral Monographs, no. 6), 1991. pp. viii-214. BF 695. ISBN 90-6831-309-6.

The life of the Church in India continually draws the attention of sincere foreign scholars who study and explain the various movements in the country. One of the popular themes is ashrams and the gurus connected with them. The book under review is a well-informed account of the life in a few Catholic ashrams specially from the perspective of the role of the guru in the ashram life.

The first part makes a summary study of the relation master-disciple from the perspective of the sociology of religion, in Hinduism and Christianity. The second part focuses on the relation of Abhishikṭananda to Hindu gurus, specially Ramana Maharshi, Gnanananda and to the Parsi Dr

Dinshaw Mehta, and on his reflections on Christ as the Guru. The third part describes half a dozen Catholic ashrams and analyses what is the rule of the human guru in them, both in theory and in practice, and compares this role to that of similar figures in the history of Christianity, both East and West, ancient and modern. The author brings out the intrinsic ambiguity and the tension involved in the idea of a Catholic guru, since the concept of guru tends to imply an absolute character which the sacramentality of the Christian guru cannot but disown. On the other hand, when speaking of the ashrams as such, the author seems to make her own the words of Jyoti Sahi and sees them as "India's gift to humanity as a whole" (202). A book useful for Indian theological libraries.

G. GISPert-SAUCH, S.J.

**Striving Together: A Way Forward in Christian-Muslim Relations.** By Charles KIMBALL. Maryknoll, N.Y., Orbis Books, 1991. pp. xviii-132. \$ 10.95 pb. ISBN 0-88344-691-X.

This book is a wonderful general introduction to Christian-Muslim dialogue, defined on p. 86 as "more than an exchange of views. In a fundamental sense, it is a perspective, a stance, an openness. Dialogue represents a way of relating, even if the openness and vulnerability are not fully reciprocated. Ideally mutuality in dialogue is present in communication, trust, understanding, challenge, growth, and even spiritual development." Beginning with the increasing interdependence and interaction between different faith communities in all spheres of modern life, the book stresses the author's personally experienced role of dialogue as bringing about cooperation and friendship when faced with conflict and chaos, and as one way of fulfilling the Christian responsibility to love one's neighbour as oneself and not to bear false witness against him or her. However, true dialogue

is possible only if one follows a number of steps: First, a study of the history of Christian-Muslim interaction over the centuries, which involves studying the faith, history and the contribution of Islam to the world community, a study of the changing Christian perspectives on Islam, and a study of the different Muslim views on Christianity. This will, it is hoped, help to free us from deep-seated unconscious prejudices, stereotypes, hostility and fear. Then, a Christian may choose from one of the three theological orientations that have so far been used in dialogue: exclusivism where Christ is the only way to salvation, inclusivism where God is present and active in other religious traditions and fully and definitively revealed in Jesus Christ, or pluralism where God is greater than any of the existing religious traditions which are different or various valid paths to Him. Finally, one must recognize that both Christianity and Islam manifest such great diversity and complexity within themselves that no single person can fully explain and manifest either faith tradition.

With the orientation thus gained one could try to involve oneself in one or more of the various types of dialogue that have been tried out in recent history: parliamentary, theological, institutional, community and life, spiritual, and inner dialogue. Finally, the book ends with brief surveys of some worldwide and regional efforts at dialogue (the WCC Program for Dialogue with People of Living Faiths, The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, etc.) giving their successes and failures, and a set of practical guidelines gained from these experiences.

D. PINTO

Les Sociétés du Moyen-Orient comme lieu théologique. Ed. by JAD HATEM. Beyrouth-Jounieh (Lebanon), Éditions Saint Paul, 1991. pp. 127. US \$ 15.

Lebanon is not merely a battle-ground between Islam and Christianity. It is also a

fascinating meeting point where many Christian and Muslim currents intermingle and react to the modern world. The *Centre de théologie pour le moyen-orient* thinks that theological reflection on current problems is important even in the midst of a tragic situation. Because theology is the harbinger of hope, provided it is a committed theology that does not withdraw into an ivory tower but meets the challenges of the day. The present collection presents the papers of the second interdisciplinary colloquium organised by the Centre.

Besides the inaugural lecture by the editor on the role of theology, we have six contributions all bearing on current theological issues. A. Dupré de la Tour speaks on the Bible and desecralisation while the editor Jad Hatem presents a study of the Trinity precisely in the context of political theology. S. Descy studies further the problem of theological epistemology in the field of politics specially in the context of liberation theology. Juliette Hadad offers a glimpse into the theology of the couple while J. Sleiman describes the various Christian communities in Lebanon with their characteristics and their possible contribution to the ecumenical dialogue, with its dangers and opportunities. Finally Thom Sicking studies the complementarity and the opposition between tradition and modernity in the Middle East.

All in all, a rich theological fare from a region at which we do not look often for inspiration, to our loss. The local atmosphere is sensed in the rich references to the eastern Christian tradition and to the Muslim reality. But there is also a clear presence of liberation and western theology. Contrary to the claims of a number of people, liberation theology is not restricted to Latin America nor western theology to Europe or North America, nor are they found irrelevant outside their birthplaces. Every theology has a universal potential meant to enrich the whole Church.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

## The Couple

**Man and Woman He Made Them.** By Jean VANIER. Bombay, St Paul Publications, 1985. pp. xiv-177. Rs 15 pb. ISBN 81-7109-070-2.

This work comes as a result of the author's reflection on his experience with the handicapped in the homes of the French L'Arche movement. It is full of profound insights and practical suggestions. The author summarizes his findings in the words: "The human being is so complex, so rich in possibilities for growth, yet so vulnerable and fragile, so quick to lose confidence in self and in others" (p.4). Problems in the area of sexuality are placed within the wider context of love and relationship. The value of the human body and the need for the integration of sexuality into the total personality are stressed.

The experience with the handicapped brings out the causes of sexual problems like masturbation, homosexuality, emotional immaturity and promiscuity. It is due to a wounded heart that other difficulties arise. Hence the need for healing the heart through a redeeming love. The author provides a comprehensive scheme for sex education that will strike a middle path between rigidity and permissiveness. He emphasizes the need for genuine community for mature growth.

He does well to point out that the more basic human need is for intimacy and not genitality. He brings out the specific differences between man and woman without exaggerating them. The problems of celibate living and married life lived together are discussed. True celibacy is a mystery of love, and marriage is a call for unity and intimate relationship. The place of fecundity and the fruitfulness of suffering are also brought out.

In an otherwise stimulating work, the confusion between ethics and law (p. 170) could have been avoided. Ethics is not so much about law as moral values.

*The book makes inspiring reading and is meant to be quietly pondered.*

George LOBO, S.J.

**The Law of Marriage and Matrimonial Reliefs for Christians in India. A Juridical Evaluation of Canon Law and Civil Law.** By William E. PINTO. Bangalore, Theological Publications in India, 1991. pp. xxxviii-381. Rs 80 (pb).

This is the first comprehensive work on Catholic Marriage Law and Indian Civil Law on marriage and divorce. The author's competent and thorough handling of the subject will be of great benefit not only to Church tribunal personnel, pastors and students, but also to civil lawyers.

The author has tried to tackle the complex problem of reform of the civil law on marriage in India. At present Church annulments are not recognized by civil courts and the civil divorce procedure is outdated and discriminatory against women. The author proposes the goal of a common Civil Code, although he would make it optional. He suggests that all marriages in the Church should be registered before the Registrar of Marriages just as it is done in the case of births and deaths. He does not mention that this is already done in Goa and Pondicherry. He also points out that even now there is nothing to hinder registration of Christian marriages under Sect. 15 of the Special Marriage Act of 1954. In such a case civil relief under Sect. 27 could more easily be obtained by the aggrieved party, for instance, on the ground of alleged desertion without reasonable cause for more than three years.

The efforts of a group of Christians to reform the civil law on marriage are pointed out. Their main contribution is a draft on Christian Marriage and Matrimonial Causes Act, 1988. The proposals made by the CBCI secretariat for discussion among the Catholic community are not mentioned. Under "Recommendations by the CBCI," only certain applications of the new Canon

Law are given. It would have been interesting to know the mind of the author on the three alternatives proposed by the Secretariat.

Among some matters of detail, the following could be mentioned. On p. 76, there seems to be some confusion between "inter-faith" and "ecumenical" marriage. The author has done well in pointing out that in the new law, the second promise in the case of mixed marriages "is not absolutely to bring up all children as Catholics, but 'to try to do all that is in one's power'" (p. 30). He extends the validity of marriage between Catholic and non-Catholic Orientals when it is presided over by a non-Catholic deacon. But it should be noted that for validity of marriage according to the Orientals, a priestly blessing is needed. In explaining reverential fear, it is said that there should be a "real fear of real evil, viz. incurring indignation or anger." What about the fear of gravely displeasing one under whose lawful power one lives, and towards whom one feels a sense of duty?

The book is enriched by three Appendices which make up nearly half the volume: (1) The Code of Canon Law, 1983; (2) Civil Law; (3) Law for Oriental Churches, 1990. The last is given in the Latin original since an authoritative translation was perhaps not yet available at the time of publication. Still, the author could have attempted a translation as few would be able to follow the Latin version. The detailed table of contents and exhaustive index makes consultation of the work easier. The author deserves to be congratulated this first attempt to bring out such a valuable and accurate work on a most complex subject.

George LOBO, S.J.✠

## Scripture

**The Triumph Of God. The Essence of Paul's Thought.** By J. Christiaan BEKER.

Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990. Pp. xvi-152. \$ 8.95. ISBN 0-8006-2438-6.

Some readers may know of Beker's major study *Paul The Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (1980) which broke new ground in the study of Paul. The present book is an abridged version of this large work and was published originally in German in 1988 in the *Suttgart Bibel Studien* series. An important article from a very fine biblical journal *Interpretation* entitled "Paul the Theologian: Major Motifs in Pauline Theology" (1989), has been added to the English translation as an Appendix (pp. 117-135). There is a bibliography and index of Names and Scripture texts.

Beker, like many recent pauline scholars (Schweizer, Sanders, Fitzmyer, Hayes, Reumann, Stendhal, Dahl, Davies, Plevnik) wants to determine and describe the centre (essence, core . . .) of Paul's thought. His valuable contribution has been to emphasize the interplay between coherence and contingency, the importance of Paul's primordial experience of the Christ Event, its articulation by means of the symbolic world of Jewish apocalyptic, the distinction between these realities, the difference between the basic (primary) and the contingent (secondary) articulations of this experience, and the importance of taking into consideration the occasional nature of Paul's correspondence. The author judges that apocalyptic is the "master symbol" of Paul's articulation and that "theocentric apocalyptic forms the matrix" of his theocentric theology. Therefore the centre or point of coherence is the Triumph of God. He underlines the value of such an approach for dialogue and for a solidarity that replaces individualism, the importance of the cosmic and universal dimensions of Paul's theology, and of the human responsibility for stewardship of the cosmos and solidarity in suffering.

The weakness of the thesis is its inability to accommodate the crucial aspects

of "Christocentric soteriology" (Fitzmyer) within this apocalyptic mould. He overemphasizes the importance of Jewish (Christian) apocalyptic as the central medium for the articulation of Paul's basic experience of God the Father who revealed his Son to (in) him (Gal 1:16) as the source of salvation for all.

I have the impression that Beker argues backwards, as it were, from the crucial importance of God as initiator and end of the whole saving event to the more or less exclusive role of apocalyptic, which reinforces his choice of the theocentric dimension as the most basic and determinative element in Paul's theology.

The present book clarifies and modifies some of Beker's earlier positions. The structure of the development of his thought is clear. However, the language is fairly esoteric and there are overextended interactions with other authors. There is little for the heart and life, for the aim is to clarify and substantiate the thesis about coherence and contingency.

The appended chapter is a valuable description and critique of the various proposals about the centre of Paul's theology. One of the more readable and in my judgement more adequate descriptions of the centre, with a critique of contemporary scholars, is Plevnik's "The Centre of Pauline Theology" (CBQ 51 [1989] 461-78).

This volume deserves to be read by all who teach Paul and by students interested to grappling with the questions of method and attitudes which are appropriate for the study of Paul and with the depths of Paul's understanding of what the Father has done in Christ for all humanity.

Paddy MEAGHER, S. J.

**Walking between the Times. Paul's Moral Reasoning.** By J. Paul SAMPLEY. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991. Pp.vi-122. N.p. ISBN 0-8006-2479-3.

The first part of this book which omits any consideration of Ephesians and Colossians, describes Paul's Frame of Reference. The initial description of the apocalyptic frame is very well done with emphasis on the interrelationship between the *past* (no longer), the *present* (now/already) and the *future* (not yet) in Paul's thought and the centrality of God's saving action in Jesus Christ's death and resurrection. This chapter deserves to be read. The other part of this section, Paul's Vista of Life in the World, is disappointing and inexact. All non-believers cannot be described as living "as enemies of the Cross" (Phil 3:18-19, pp.29-30); nor is it correct to state that "Paul does not counsel divorce unless the believer requests it" (1 Cor 7:15,p.30); nor can it be said that he has a negative description of *all* authorities on the basis of 1 Cor 2:6-8 and 15:24. Texts are used without adequate attention to the limitations imposed by the specific context and without sufficient explanation.

The major theme of the book is Paul's moral reasoning (chs. 3-9). The opening chapter deals with the primacy of the community: "The community is, after all, the matrix within which individual lives of faith are nurtured and maintained" (p. 37-8). The basis for community is the believers' participation in the Christ Event (Paul's "in Christ"). Having affirmed the importance of each believer as person, Sampley studies the elements which go into the process of coming to moral decisions with emphasis on love's centrality, building community, conscience, the negative role of doubt, the importance of the "measure of faith" (Rom 12:3), the place of conviction, lists of vices, personal maturity, freedom and rewards. In overlapping short chapters he describes the pauline process of continuing discernment and the resources available for this discernment (Spirit, imitation of Paul, Christ as model, imitation of others, various sources of knowledge [previous instructions, scripture, Christian tradition, maxims]).

He emphasizes the place of gratitude to God and eschatological fulfillment in moral reasoning and the dissonance we experience today with aspects of Paul's moral arguments.

I judge that he pays exaggerated attention to 1 Cor 8-11 and Rom 14:1-15:12 and covers too many texts without situating them in their specific and limited contexts or giving sufficient explanation. He over-emphasizes the "conservative" streak in Paul, does not develop adequately the role of the Holy Spirit and the Christological motivation in so far as it plays a role in the process of making moral decisions. The treatment of maxims and their role is well done, and the emphasis on the communitarian dimension important, and the way the author gathers and exposes the multiple elements involved in the process is remarkably done. He rightly stresses the role of personal Christian maturity though I judge he draws too much out of the phrase "measure of faith".

The book is a valuable addition to the studies of Pauline ethics which normally well educated Christians will find enlightening and useful. There are no footnotes, bibliography and only an index of Scripture passages. There is a lot of information in this book.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

**Christological Motives and Motivated Actions in Pauline Paraenesis.** By Heronymus CRUZ. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1990. Pp. 484. S.Fr. 100. ISBN 3-631-42857-X.

This is a doctoral thesis completed in 1981 and defended at the Gregorian University in 1982, written under Professor E. Rasco, S.J., and published by Peter Lang in their European University Studies series. The only addition to the thesis is two pages of bibliography covering the period 1980-1989.

There have been other studies of the motives underlying Pauline ethical instructions (Nieder, Merk and more recently Pastor Ramos, Deidun, Zedda and we could add Furnish...). However, this is the most thorough and specific study of the Christological motives and the types of ethical actions motivated by these motives. An obvious mode of approach to such a study would be to concentrate on a series of longer texts where these motives are at work. However, the author divides his study according to the phases of the event of Jesus Christ which are used as motives: a. from his historical life (teaching, death and resurrection); b. his risen life (various types of relationships with the living Christ); c. the future coming of Christ (Parousia-judgement); and d. the whole Christ event as a totality (e.g., as in Phil 2:5-11).

Such a division with multiple subdivisions ensures a very thorough and analytic study. However it also entails returning to the same passage a number of times under different headings (e.g., 1 Cor 6:12-20; Col 2-3) and the consequent repetition or need for the reader to recall earlier sections and the lack of a synthetic exposition of the whole pericope. The result is certain heaviness and dissipation in the exposition of pericopes. On the other hand there is very abundant information, careful analysis and exegesis on brief texts and a great thoroughness.

The methodology used is the historico-critical approach. We are exposed to a thorough, careful, detailed and extensive exegesis with elaborate footnotes and the concise study of words and grammatical constructions. The author has read widely in four languages (English, French, German and Italian), consulted and used the major commentaries and many books and articles. All his conclusions or exegetical decisions are substantiated by the authority of commentators and argued from the text. The hermeneutical dimension of the interpretative process is not attended to in the thesis.



Yet on the basis of the thesis a good study of pauline ethics for contemporary Christian communities in India could be written as the exegesis has been done with great proficiency. I wonder if the author will provide such a service.

The volume has all the expected apparatus and structure of a doctoral thesis. Though Greek and foreign languages are used, yet a reader with a basic knowledge of Greek can follow the exposition and reasoning. One major lacuna is the absence of any indices. Though the Table of Contents is very detailed, yet an index of Greek words and Scripture texts would enable competent readers to use the thesis often in their own teaching and study with great ease. The presentation is excellent.

I judge this to be a very competent and informative study. It has naturally the strengths and weaknesses of an exegetical doctoral thesis. The conclusions, though very brief, especially on pp. 441-44 open up vistas for developing a contemporary ethical formation.

As I read through I noted exegesis and comments with which I would not agree either because greater precision or more nuanced explanations is needed, or a contrary exegetical decision seems more valid or the substantiation of a point is weak. However the exegesis is of a consistent high standard and the information superabundant. At times the English lacks grace or clarity and the proof reading deserved more attention. The book deserves to be in any good scriptural library and many teachers of Paul will often look at this store of abundant information and good exegesis.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

## Book Notices

### Spirituality

**Following the Lord Jesus.** By A. D. MANUEL. Madras: CLS. 1991. Pp. 77. Rs 15.

A few words from the Preface give us a true taste of the content of these reflections on themes which are interpretations of biblical texts: "Christian discipleship today is not one of his followers straining themselves to catch up with a distant Christ, but one of seeing Christ with, in and under circumstances in which they are called upon to face life today and to participate in Christ's own life and ministry." Specific texts are chosen as anchors for themes which are developed, using the riches of the Bible. Some of the major texts are: Lk 9:57-62; 15:20-32; 12:32; Heb 2:2-3; 2 Cor 12:2-4; Phil 2:5-11; Rom 8:23-26. . . . Good devotional reading, inspiring and formative.

**What Think You of Christ. A Life of Christ for Those Who would Like to Know Him Better.** By Brother ANDREW. Bandra: St Paul Publications, 1962/1991. Pp. 101. Rs 12. ISBN 81-7009-128-8.

This book, written when Brother Andrew was thirty-four and a Jesuit scholar, has been out of print for some years. This is a reprint. Of the book he writes: "This is not a book for scholars or even for students. It is a book for the sincere, for the simple pilgrims searching for God. . . . There is only one real value in this little book . . ." which "comes from the rich, life-giving, personal Jesus who walks through these pages, who walks through your life, dear reader . . . simply because He loves us . . ." (p.7). Many will be pleased to have this reprint of a very devotional and challenging approach to Jesus the Lord. **Send Us Thy Spirit O Lord.** By O. M. RAO. Delhi: ISPCK, 1990. Pp. 52. Rs 15.

The WCC took as its theme for the recent World Assembly "Come, Holy Spirit . . .". This short book is a brief catechism on the Holy Spirit, based on the biblical witness to the Spirit. This is useful reading especially where there is confusion about the presence and work of the Spirit in Christian life.

**Let My People Go.** O. M. RAO. Delhi: ISPCK, 1991. Pp. 73. Rs 15.

The four chapters of this book which grew out of addresses given to the Council of Christian Churches in North East India deal with the story of Israel from Abraham's call, through the Exodus to the Settlement of Israel in the Land. Moses' call and mission forms the background to the reflections on the Exodus-Covenant theme. The author wants to interpret this great series of events in the context of India today and the Church's own mission. Useful reading.

**Come Close to the Lord.** Bible Services for Major Occasions in the Year. By R. H. LESSER. Bandra: St Paul Publications. 1991. Pp. 128. ISBN 81-7108-137-7.

This is a type of handbook for anyone who wishes to have an aid for Bible services. The author suggests a pattern of songs, prayers, readings, silence and some reflections for the particular days chosen in this selection. Busy priests, school teachers and lay leaders could find help in this book for meaningful Bible services with all types of groups.

**God Made Man.** By Steve BORGIA. Madras: CLS, 1991.

This enjoyable book, with forty black and white pencil sketches and one thousand and four hundred words, is the story of God and the human family. A flaw in the book is the use of man for male female. The human family took their freedom, forgot their God, killed his greatest gift and became slaves of the machine which became their master. All this is told by "cartoons" and an imaginative and homely text with a definite message for us today, so fascinated by technology and slaves to consumerism.

**From Mourning to Morning.** By John H. PIET. Madras: Christian Literature Society (CLS), 1991. Pp. xi-78. Rs 15.

This is a thematic commentary on selected lectionary readings for the period Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday inclusive. The author is an experienced

theologian and pastor in India, Asia and USA. He wants to indicate how homilies in this special season of the year need to be thematic. He illustrates this. He introduces the Sunday, comments on each of the readings and brings his thought together in a conclusion. Valuable for pastors and good devotional reading and for prayer.

**God on Weekdays.** God Speaks to us on Weekdays Too. By R. SCHOCH, S.J., Bombay: Madonna Publications (Jovals Business Centre, 138, Hiranandani Ind. Est., Kanjur-marg, Bombay 400078). Pp. x-1023.

The format of this aid for the use of the biblical readings on weekdays in homilies and prayer is of follows: During Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent and Easter, when there are two readings normally thematically chosen, there is a single introduction before the readings. There is a reflection after the Gospels for the Easter season. For weekdays of the thirty-three weeks of the year there is an introduction to the First Reading of each of the two cycles and a reflection after the common Gospel.

A distinctive feature of this "commentary" on the daily lectionary is the inclusion of the whole biblical text for each reading. The Psalms are excluded, which is a loss. Despite the inclusion of the text the book is not bulky thanks to the fine paper used. It is also easy to read. Many people will be pleased to have the biblical text and brief comments together.

The introduction and reflections are brief and clear. They are simple, informative and reflect the spirituality of ordinary Christians. Many will be helped. Many will find the attempt to introduce the biblical text too thin. Readers more acquainted with post-Vatican scriptural study will be aware that the OT and Gospels are taken too much at face value, the introductions lack a sensitivity to the nature of the OT, the long history of its redactional origin and the ongoing process of interpretation. The reflections at times do not catch the real depth of

the Gospels and the language used is unaware of women, changing attitudes to other religions and the issues of justice. Many will be pleased to have this stimulus to reflect, pray and live lives inspired by the daily Word of God. Too few of us adequately use this daily bread.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

## Youth

**Parables and Fables for Modern Man.** By Peter RIBES, S.J. Bandra: St Paul Publications 1988 (Vol 1.); 1991 (Vols 2.3.4.). Pp. 228, 146, 128, 128. Rs 45/32. ISBN 81-7109-006-0/139-3/140-7/141-5.

The appealing covers of these four short books immediately strike you. As you thumb through them the illustrations are quite captivating—congratulations to Sr Solange SMMI! The success of Peter Ribes' first volume encouraged him to write more parables-stories with some changes in the format and added aids for use. He changed from script writing and skit presentation of the stories to straight story telling.

In each of the new volumes the parables have been gathered thematically: Vol. 2 parables bear on religious values; Vol.3 parables on personal and psychological values and Vol.4 parables on social and justice values. Like the first these volumes have subject indices. The subtitle for volume I is "30 scripts for moderators and animators and for the reading pleasure of those fond of 'flights of fancy'." The author gives detailed instructions and suggesting to use these books in classroom, discussion groups, prayer days, seminars. . . . These are more elaborate in the first volume. The volume presents the parables as scripts and skits for audio-visual use. Moderators of groups can adapt the stories in the other volumes in this way also. There are plenty of suggestions on how to involve others in the narration, reflection, discussion. I picked stories to read at random. In volume I the stories are explicitly related to Christian

themes by means of the questions and reference to the Bible. In the other books the suggestions for moderators indicate how they can be used by groups of any religion. The stories themselves, some newly created, some adapted from existing stories, are delightful and will catch the readers attention and interest. They have the potential to elicit plenty of reflections and the suggestions for the moderator are plentiful and practical. A very good series for all types of educators of youth.

**Three Days with God. Seeking God in the Bhakti Marg.** By Ramon NUBIOLA, S.J. Bandra: St Paul Publications, 1991. Pp. 115. Rs 13. ISBN 81-7109-136-6.

This book is a type of handbook for young people of any religious tradition to use either for devotional reading and more specifically for recollections. There are four sections: Acceptance of God's Existence; Accepting God's Love; Acceptance of God's Pardon and Accepting God's Friendship and Intimacy. Each section has three to six sections. This is a good book for teachers to use and recommend to young people.

**Be at Your Best.** By James ARIL, S.J., Bombay: Better Yourself Books. 1991. Pp. 80. Rs 14. ISBN 81-7108-154-1.

In this book the author reflects on major areas of growth for young people today like self-image, intimacy, sexual integration, inner attitudes to the self, relationship to God. . . . This is a useful addition to the Better Yourself Books series.

From the Development Education Series (Delhi: ISPCK) we have a few more slender booklets. Alcoholism (By Sr Rose KOCHITARA, 1990, pp.21. Rs 2) is a brief reflection on a major problem. **Destined to Be Humane** (By Sudhakar S. RAMTEKE, 1991, pp.50. Rs 4.50) is a collection of poems on human dignity and human values. There is also a reflection on Sati: **Sati pratha per ek nazar** (By Dr Ram Datt VASHISTH, 1989, pp.33. Rs 3.50).

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

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# *Vidyajyoti*

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### **Editorial**

#### **Paths of Mission**

In the wake of the publication of the Encyclical "Redemptoris Missio" in December, 1990, by Pope John Paul II, there has been a spate of comments, reflections and discussions on the mission of the Church. In so far as it defines the being of the Church, there will be for ever need of a new contextualisation of the mission in a rapidly changing world. Every local Church has to discern and learn the paths of mission in its situation. Our JOURNAL already alluded to this and other recent documents, in the April and earlier issues. This month four writers present their reflections on the mission of the Church in South Asia against the background of the recent major documents of the Church. We believe that the different articles complement one another.

Fr Neuner makes a comparative study of the mission Decree "Ad Gentes" of Vatican II and the Encyclical "Redemptoris Missio" in relation to their different contexts and scopes. In AG, the Church in a mood of confidence "born in the midst of the joyful opening of the Church to the modern world" gave expression to the rich theological understanding of the comprehensiveness of God's saving love for all

peoples revealed in Jesus Christ, whereas RM responds to a crisis in missionary spirit and intends to reawaken missionary zeal for proclamation, without ignoring the task of dialogue with religions and promotion of justice as constitutive dimensions of the service of faith. Neuner adverts to the dangers in one-sided or narrow interpretations of the approaches of the two documents. Yet in his view one should understand their perspectives as complementary to each other.

Fr Paul Caspersz reflects on the mission of the Church from the point of view of promotion of justice and human rights. He pleads for an understanding of mission in relation to the context of South Asia marked by mass poverty reinforced by internal and external factors of colonial history and the millennial heritage of religions. In this context he points out the danger of "spiritualizing" the mission of the Church divorced from the history of the subcontinent. In the author's view, the Church can fulfil her mission properly in South Asia by becoming a Church of the poor. The Church is called to take this contextual imperative seriously and learn new paths of mission in our countries.

Fr Patrick Meagher, a specialist in Pauline theology, probes the theological source of Paul's mission. Though Paul did not have the experience of dialogue with religions in our sense, he unambiguously states the source of his missionary labours: the revelation of the Father and his redemptive plan for all humankind manifested in our Lord Jesus Christ. In our situation of religious pluralism one may ask if Paul's experience of the mystery of God's reconciling love revealed in Christ includes the yearnings of people of other faiths for liberation and their experience of the ultimate Mystery. We cannot expect Paul to have asked our questions, but we, rooted as we are in the same experience as Paul and called to share that experience, should reflect

on the inclusiveness of God's redemptive love revealed in Christ in our pluralistic situation.

Fr Augustine Kanjamala SVD presents a case study of mission in the Hindi belt. He offers a historical survey of the mission of the Church in the region. Today, mission to the tribals and dalits is a major concern of the Church. Kanjamala then explains the emerging trends in mission theology and methods of evangelisation and relates them to the region under survey. In the light of this, he proposes a revised set of priorities in the mission of the Church. We note however that setting out new priorities is a task before the churches of the region. They have to respond to the challenges of the changing context of India.

We believe that the four papers, whatever be their limitations, respond to one of the aims the Holy Father gave to his Encyclical, "to encourage theologians to explore and expound systematically the various aspects of missionary activity" (RM 2). They will hopefully stimulate further reflection and contribute towards a contextualised understanding of the mission of the Church in South Asia. We know too that there will be some questions that will continue to bother us but mission as service of the Gospel to our people will challenge continually the quality of our faith, hope and love. Responsibility for mission is grace and opportunity for service.

In the next issues, we hope to continue this reflection on mission from a dialogical perspective. All these articles, we hope, will invite comments and discussion.

**The EDITOR.**

## Mission in *Ad Gentes* and in *Redemptoris Missio*

J. NEUNER, S.J.

Vatican II expert theologian Fr Neuner (St Vincent's, Pune 411 001) compares here the Council mission Decree with John Paul II's recent mission encyclical. He shows that the scope of the two documents is different, one wants to offer a rich theological understanding of the mission to a Church confident of itself; the other tries to meet a crisis in the mission spirit. Their theological perspectives are also changed: one goes from the comprehensiveness of God's love to its realisation in Jesus Christ; the other returns to an earlier model and begins with Jesus Christ in whom to find the fullness of human life. While both approaches are legitimate one must be conscious of the dangers in each: one may lead to ignoring the role of Jesus in God's plan, the other may foster a narrow theological and missionary mentality.

**W**ith the renewed vision of the Church unfolded in the Second Vatican Council every sphere in the life of the Church received a new orientation. New perspectives were also needed in the missionary activity of the Church for additional reasons: not only had the self-understanding of the Church been deepened, but the entire world situation radically changed. During more than four centuries after the "discovery" of new continents and new sea routes, many peoples in these countries lived under colonial rule, first under Portugal and Spain, later under Britain, France and Holland. The missionary activity among these peoples had taken place under the umbrella of the political, economic and military supremacy of the Western world, connected with its culture and civilization. This situation had radically changed after the Second World War. Colonies became independent nations and young churches had to stand on their own feet to live their life and fulfil their mission under totally new conditions.

Thus the problem of Vatican II with regards the missionary activity was twofold: a new understanding of the Church with a deeper grasp of her message, in a radically changed world. The

Council responded to these problems in the mission Decree *Ad Gentes* (AG), while many problems had been taken up in other documents.

AG remained decisive for the orientation of the Church's missionary activity in the post-conciliar era. Ten years after the Council, Pope Paul VI published the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (EN) in which he makes his own "the objectives of the Second Vatican Council which are definitely summed up in this single one: to make the Church ever better fitted for proclaiming the Gospel to the people of the twentieth century" (EN 2).

The new encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (RM) of Pope John Paul II places itself in this stream: "Twenty-five years after the conclusion of the Council and the publication of the Decree AG, fifteen years after . . . *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, I wish to invite the Church to renew her missionary commitment" (RM 2).

Our reflections on the two documents begin with the scope and purpose of AG and RM (I), and lead to the theological approach of the texts (II). The vision of the actual missionary work is then outlined (III). We conclude with the question of the pastoral approach in AG and RM (IV).

## I. The Scope of AG and RM

The problems of the Council in formulating the Church's mission in the context of a new ecclesiology and in a totally transformed world are reflected in the origin of the document. The first schema composed by the preparatory commission was primarily concerned with problems of government, administration and the much needed cooperation of the faithful. It did not deal with the theological foundations and motivation of the Church's mission. It took them for granted. After the opening of the Council the newly elected commission took over the responsibility of the text. The need to spell out the theological basis of the Church's mission was stressed. After long discussions a short basic text was prepared for the Constitution on the Church as a conclusion to the chapter on the people of God: it proclaimed the mission of the Church to preach the Gospel, not only to save us from destruction but to heal and perfect the human family (LG 17). With great difficulty the commission finally succeeded in presenting a full schema for discussion in the *Aula*. However, in the meantime the coordinating commission had decided that all documents which had not yet been discussed should be reduced to short propositions. During the third period of



the Council one such brief text reached the *Aula*. There it found a stormy reception in spite of the personal recommendation of Pope Paul VI. Prominent cardinals and bishops of all countries pleaded that, in the present situation of Church and the world, merely practical proposals for the Church's missionary activity were insufficient. We need new perspectives and orientations. The criticism swelled to a protest against the brief schema as failing to do justice to this central concern of the Church. In the vote about the need of a new, full-fledged schema, 1601 bishops demanded a new text, only 311 were satisfied with the brief propositions.

Thus a small commission was constituted with the task to prepare a full decree on the missionary activity of the Church to be discussed in the fourth and final session of the Council. It was the desire of the Council:

- to have a text sufficiently elaborate to express the significance of the Church's missionary task;
- that it should spell out the theological basis of this mission on the lines of the renewed self-understanding of the Church;
- that this vision of the Church's mission be related to the actual world situation characterized by emerging nations who had become conscious of their own cultural and religious traditions and had to face their problems in the social, political and economic spheres.

The mission Decree *Ad Gentes* is the result of this last effort of the Council. It must be read and understood as the answer to these problems. It is remarkable that in the final vote this text received the highest unanimity of all Council texts, with 2394 positive against only five negative votes.

The scope of the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* is different. It is the answer to the situation twenty-five years after the Council which is marked by a serious decline of the missionary spirit in the Church. Already Pope Paul VI had raised serious questions ten years after the Council:

- What has happened in our day to the hidden energy of the Good News, which is able to have a powerful effect on the human conscience?
- To what extent and in what way is this evangelical force capable of really transforming the people of this century?
- What methods should be followed in order that the power of the Gospel may have its effect? (EN 4).

Pope John Paul II feels that these problems have become more pressing today. In his various apostolic journeys he has taken a keen personal interest in this mission. In his encyclical he wishes to affirm again with the Vatican Council "the missionary nature of the Church" (RM 1). He first points out the positive results of the Council: not only the expansion of organized missionary work but the development of Christian communities, the greater involvement of the laity, ecumenical collaboration and the awareness that "missionary activity is a matter not of specialised groups only but of all Christians" (RM 2). Then he proceeds to the observation of an "undeniable negative tendency: the present document is meant to help overcome it. Missionary activity specifically directed to the nations appears to be waning (RM 2). This is a matter of deep concern for him because "in the Church's history missionary drive has always been a sign of vitality, just as its lessening is a sign of a crisis of faith" (*ibid.*).

The present world situation offers us new and unexpected opportunities to communicate the Christian message: "The collapse of oppressive ideologies and political systems; the opening of frontiers and the formation of a more united world due to an increase in communications" (RM 3). But many seem to have lost confidence in the Christian message: "Some people wonder if missionary work among non-Christians is still relevant. Has it not been replaced by interreligious dialogue?" For many human development becomes the goal of the Church's mission. "Is it not possible to attain salvation in any religion? Why then should there be missionary activity?" (RM 4).

The main reason for the fading of the missionary spirit is, according to RM the weakening of faith and a softened theology. Many begin to "speak of a Jesus of history who would differ from a Christ of faith" (RM 6). We are affected by the tendency of the modern world "to reduce Christianity to merely human wisdom, a pseudo-science of wellbeing" and to fall in line with the "gradual secularization of salvation" where "people strive for the good of man, but man is truncated, reduced to his merely horizontal dimension." For the Pope "mission is an issue of faith, an accurate indicator of our faith in Christ and his love for us" (RM 11).

This, then, is the central question of the encyclical: is our Christian message still understood and accepted as decisive for our world and modern society? The question is answered in the first three chapters of the document.

## II. The Theology of AG and RM

At the explicit wish of the bishops, the Council developed the theological foundations of missionary activity in view of the changed world situation, in the framework of the renewed ecclesiology.

The doctrinal section of AG is closely connected with the Constitution on the Church. Yves Congar was the main personal link with the theological commission. Both texts open with the Church's mission to the nations: "Christ, the light of the nations" which shines on the countenance of the Church sent his disciples to "proclaim the Gospel to every creature" (LG 1). The mission Decree takes up the vision of the Church "divinely sent to the nations for whom she is the universal sacrament of salvation." She has to fulfil her mission in the "present historical situation which is leading humanity into a new stage . . . set with new urgency to save and renew every creature" so that "all things be restored in Christ" (AG 1).

The unfolding of this mission begins with God the Father "the fountain of love . . . graciously calling us to communicate in life and glory with himself. He has generously poured out his divine goodness and does not cease to do so. Thus He who made all things may at last be all in all" (AG 2).

This "universal design" of God is realized in the mission of "His Son . . . that he might snatch men from the power of darkness . . . and might reconcile the world to Himself" (AG 3). Thus Jesus' mission is placed into the universal context of the all-embracing saving love of God, the sole origin and goal of all salvation. "To accomplish this goal, Christ sent the Holy Spirit from the Father" (AG 4) and entrusted his mission to the Church: "He sent his apostles into all the world just as he himself had been sent by his Father" (AG 5).

Thus the Church's mission aims at the ultimate fulfilment of God's universal will of salvation: "According to this plan the whole human race is to form one people of God, coalesce into one body of Christ and be built up into one temple of the Holy Spirit . . . So the plan of the creator, who formed man to his own image and likeness, will be realized at last when all who share one human nature, regenerated in Christ through the Holy Spirit and beholding together the glory of God, will be able to say 'Our Father'" (AG 7).

The mission encyclical RM is primarily concerned with the faith in Jesus Christ as basis and inspiration of the Church's missionary activity. Thus the theological exposition begins with the Chapter on

"Jesus Christ, the only Saviour." The Pope links his message with his first encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*: "Each one is included in the mystery of redemption and with each one Christ has united himself for ever through this mystery" (RH 13, RM 4). This central theme of the encyclical is supported by the relevant texts of the New Testament all aiming at Jesus' unique position as the "one mediator". (1 Tim 2:5; RM 5), "the Alpha and Omega of all things" (Rev 22:13; RM 6).

The centrality of Christ in God's plan of salvation does not limit his mission. Salvation is offered first to all who believe: "The whole New Testament is a hymn to the new life of those who believe in Christ and live in the Church" (RM 7). It extends, however, to all people: "The universality of salvation means that it is granted not only to those who explicitly believe in Jesus Christ and enter the Church" but his "grace enlightens (all people) in a way which is accommodated to their spiritual and material situation. This grace comes through Christ . . . It enables each person to attain salvation through his or her free cooperation" (RM 10). The encyclical refers to the Council text which speaks of the communion of all people with the paschal mystery (GS 22; RM 10). Hence the missionary motivation: "Those who are incorporated in the Catholic Church ought to sense their privilege and for that very reason their greater obligation of bearing witness to the faith and to the Christian life as a service to their brothers and sisters" (RM 11).

Chapter Two is devoted to Jesus' message of God's Kingdom. It is "the purpose of his mission" (RM 13) to proclaim it as the "communion among all human beings with one another and with God" (RM 15). This Kingdom of God is embodied in Jesus himself, and so "the preaching of the early Church was centred on the proclamation of Jesus Christ with whom the Kingdom was identified" (RM 16). In the proclamation of God's Kingdom two pitfalls must be avoided: it must not be presented as "something completely human and secularized . . . as socio-economic, political and even cultural liberation. . . as ideology of purely earthly progress." The message includes all this but it must not "remain silent about Christ" (RM 17). God's Kingdom and the person of Jesus Christ are inseparable, and it is the Church's specific and necessary role to "announce and inaugurate God's Kingdom among all peoples" (RM 18, LG 5).

Chapter Three speaks of the Holy Spirit as the principal agent of the Church's mission because in and through the Apostles and the Church "the Holy Spirit remains the transcendent and principal

agent for the accomplishment of the Church's salvific mission in the human spirit and in the history of the world" (RM 21). He is at work, first of all, in the Church: he opens out the early community to the mission in the non-palestinian world and leads Paul "to the most important centres of the eastern Mediterranean" (RM 25). The Spirit not only awakens missionary pioneers but binds together the entire community in love and so makes it a witness to Christ, so that mission appears as the "normal outcome of Christian living to which every believer is committed through the witness of personal conduct and through explicit proclamation whenever possible" (RM 27).

This same Spirit is at work also outside the Christian community in every person as "the very source of man's existential and religious questioning." His active presence also affects "society and history, peoples, cultures and religions." He is "the origin of the noble ideals and undertakings which benefit humanity on its journey through history" (RM 28). In this context the Pope refers to the meeting in Assisi which was born from the conviction that "every authentic prayer is prompted by the Holy Spirit who is mysteriously present in every human heart" (RM 29).

Again the Pope adds the twofold warning never to separate the action of the Spirit from the person of Jesus Christ and from the mission of the Church: "Whatever the Spirit brings about in human hearts and in the history of peoples, in cultures and religions, serves as a preparation for the Gospel and can only be understood in reference to Christ." It is for the Church to discern the Holy Spirit's action in the world: "Every form of the Spirit's presence is to be welcomed with respect and gratitude, but the discernment of this presence is the responsibility of the Church" (RM 29).

Thus the theological approach of RM differs from the presentation of the Council: it begins with the person of Jesus Christ who is the only Saviour of the human family; it presents God's Kingdom from the outset as embodied in Christ's person it has to be proclaimed through the Church; the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus Christ who is at work in the Church, and whose impact outside the Church aims at preparing the nations for the faith in Jesus Christ in the Church.

### III. The Church's Mission in AG and RM

In unfolding the actual mission work of the Church and the involvement of the faithful in this task the encyclical concretizes

many of the openings of the Council's mission Decree. The Council pointed at the "gigantic missionary task" which had to be faced by the Church. She looks at the "two billion human beings who have not yet heard the Gospel" and sees among them highly differentiated groups: followers of the great religions, radical atheists, agnostics. Thus her missionary task has become very differentiated. It demands of her to "become part of all these groups for the same motive that led Christ to bind himself, in virtue of his incarnation, to the definite social and cultural conditions of those human beings among whom he dwelt" (AG 10).

The encyclical takes up the reflection on today's "religious situation which is extremely varied and changing" (RM 32). Many are reluctant today to speak of 'mission countries' as such terms are loaded with negative historical associations and prefer to speak about the one mission of the Church to be carried out in a highly differentiated society: cultures and religions are mixed through migration and urbanization; in countries of ancient Christian tradition churches stand empty whereas in young churches new communities are flourishing. Still, the encyclical insists: "To say that the whole Church is missionary does not preclude the existence of a specific mission '*ad gentes*'" (RM 32).

In concrete the present pressing needs are seen under three categories. First geographically: "The growth in the number of new churches in recent times should not deceive us . . . . Vast regions remain still to be evangelized . . . particularly in Asia towards which the Church's mission *ad gentes* ought to be chiefly directed, Christians are a small minority" (RM 37a). Significant are, secondly, the social phenomena of the modern world: "Efforts should be concentrated on the big cities . . . which influence the wider population." The active concern for the needy remains important, but "individuals or small groups cannot be evangelized if we neglect the centres where a new humanity is emerging . . . . The future of the younger nations is being shaped in the cities" (RM 37b).

A third dimension of urgent need lies in the cultural sphere. The Pope speaks of the various 'areopagi' where the culture of our time is being shaped, where therefore the message of Christ must become effective. First among them is the "world of communications" which often has been neglected. The media must be seen not only as means to communicate the Christian message. They create a 'new culture'. It is our task today "to integrate that message into the new culture." Scientific research and international relations are

another 'areopagus' (RM 37c). Further the so-called "religious revival," the search of modern society for meaning and depth in our depersonalised world, represents an opportunity to offer to the world "an immense spiritual patrimony" (RM 38). A message of particular significance for our world is "religious freedom which is still at times limited and restricted. It is the premise and guarantee of all the freedoms . . . . The Church strives for this in all countries, especially those with a Catholic majority" (RM 39). In the Council religious freedom had still been contested sharply by many; the Pope makes the breakthrough of the Declaration *Dignitatis humanae* fully his own.

In describing the process of evangelization the encyclical follows the mission Decree. AG opened this section not with the proclamation of the Christian message (as it had been done in earlier mission documents) but with the Christian witness (AG 11-12). So does the Pope: "The witness of a Christian life is the first and irreplaceable form of mission." It consists in "the very life of the missionary, of the Christian family and the ecclesial community which reveals a new way of living" (RM 42).

Unfolding the Council's emphasis on the need of a full proclamation of the Gospel (AG 13) the Pope stresses the "central and irreplaceable role" of the initial proclamation: "Christ was crucified, died and is risen: through him is accomplished our full and authentic liberation from evil, sin and death. Through him God bestows new life that is divine and eternal" (RM 44).

The proclamation aims at "Christian conversion" which consists in "accepting, by a personal decision, the saving sovereignty of Christ and becoming his disciples." It must not be reduced to "becoming more human or more faithful to their own religion . . . to build communities capable of working for justice, freedom, peace and solidarity" (RM 4). The thrust of these passages is directed against trends de-emphasizing the centrality of the person of Christ and the membership of the Church.

The Council Decree had dealt extensively with the building of Christian communities which are meant to grow into particular churches (AG 15-22). The encyclical observes that, in spite of great progress, the plantation of the Church "for much of the human race has still to begin" (RM 49). It lays emphasis on the missionary character of young communities, on ecumenical relations and basic communities which are seen as "a solid starting point for a new society based on a civilization of love" (RM 51). Inculturation is a

vital need; it must follow "two principles, compatibility with the Gospel and communion with the universal Church" (RM 54).

(Obviously interreligious dialogue and its relation to evangelization, and the socio-economic implications of the Church's mission are important sections in the encyclical. They are the theme of separate articles. Both are referred to in the Council texts *Nostra Aetate* and *Ad Gentes*.)

Who is responsible for the fulfilment of the Church's mission? The encyclical repeats the position of the Council with new emphasis: Jesus' mission is entrusted to the whole Church. Special emphasis, however, is given to the involvement of the laity. Their role is described in AG 21, 35, 36, 41. The Pope speaks of their importance especially in our modern society which is secular (RM 71f). Some phenomena of our modern society are ambiguous, they are great dangers, and at the same time offer new opportunities for the communication of the Christian message: international tourism is, on the one hand, a grave danger for the social and moral health of many people; at the same time it offers Christians of traditional churches the opportunity of firsthand experience of the spiritual and social work in young churches. In our time also the apostolate of the early Church could be renewed when "Christians travelling or settling in regions where Christ had not yet been proclaimed, bore courageous witness to their faith and founded the first communities there" (RM 82). Ever increasing numbers of people coming from non-Christian countries live in the midst of ancient traditional churches: students, workers, refugees. They are "a challenge for the ecclesial communities and a stimulus to hospitality, dialogue and service . . . Increasing interdependence between peoples constitutes a stimulus for Christian witness and evangelization" (RM 82).

These opportunities will become fruitful only if missionary formation and information opens the eyes of the faithful. In our publications missionary activity must be presented not merely as welfare work or social activity but in its full meaning as the transforming renewal in Christ.

Mutual communication is important for ancient as well as for developing churches, an attitude of give and take in enriching communion. The concern of young churches to develop their own identity is legitimate still "to these churches I say: do not isolate yourself . . . Precisely because of the problems that concern you, you need to be in continuous contact with your brothers and sisters in faith" (RM 85).



The mission Decree had outlined the elements of a missionary spirituality (AG 25). In the further development of the theme the encyclical insists first on the need of "complete docility to the Spirit to be able to give true witness to Christ" (RM 87). In line with the thrust of the whole document it insists on "the intimate union with Christ" (RM 88) and love of the Church (RM 89). To continue Christ's mission and to communicate his message, a spiritual life is needed that unites contemplation and action (RM 91). From young churches the Pope expects a renewal of the spirit in the universal Church: "You are the hope of the two-thousand-year old Church. Being young you must be like the first Christians and radiate enthusiasm and courage" (RM 91).

#### IV. The Pastoral Approach

Both the mission Decree *Ad Gentes* and the Pope's missionary encyclical are concerned not only with the theological foundations and the actual execution of the Church's mission but also with their motivation. Their aim is **pastoral**. They present the Christian message in its significance for our world so that Christians should be impelled to share it; they propose it also in a manner meaningful for the modern world, that it should pay attention and be attracted to it. How is this goal achieved in the two documents?

The mission document of the Council was born in the midst of the joyful opening of the Church to the modern world some called it an euphoria. Pope John XXIII had broken through the defensive, often frightened, attitudes of the past when many felt that the Church was fighting a losing battle against overwhelming odds: political oppression of totalitarian powers; the triumphant sciences that seemed to relegate religion to the silent museums of the past; disintegrating forces of biblical and historical criticism which seemed to destroy the very basis of the Christian faith. The Council knew no fears: it is just this modern world of ours which is in urgent need of the Gospel in its search for a true meaning of human life and solidarity. Every document of the Council breathes this spirit of confidence. If we have the courage to face the modern world, and if we are prepared to be critical also of our own traditions and ready to renew the life of the Church in the light of the Gospel we are sure that the Holy Spirit will be with his Church in its mission.

The mission Decree in all its sections is born from this spirit. Therefore also the theological foundations of the Church's mission

are presented with the vision of God's saving plan for all people "to dignify man with participation in his divine life" (AG 2). From this comprehensive vision the Decree proceeds to the realization of God's plan in Jesus Christ "so that in the Son he might restore all things" (AG 3). Jesus' person and work unfolded in their full significance, are placed into the context of God's all-embracing love.

It was the deep concern already of Pope Paul VI, and even more of Pope John Paul II, that the worldwide vision of the Council was, at times, misunderstood and misinterpreted. It seemed dangerous to start the exposition of our faith with God's universal plan of salvation: if in this plan also other religions are included, the unique place of Jesus Christ may be relativised; if God's Kingdom includes also secular realities, the concerns of our earthly life, the spiritual vigour of the Gospel may be lost; if the human conscience is the medium through which God's truth and will become binding for us, we may leave people with their own beliefs and no longer feel the urge to share the Gospel. The dangers of the Council's approach had become tangible in the post-conciliar era in the slackening of the missionary spirit and in the development of dangerous theological trends. The integrity of the Christian message must be safeguarded. Jesus Christ is the only norm of our faith, which is centred on him.

Therefore the theological exposition of the encyclical begins with the chapter on "Jesus Christ the only Saviour." The centrality of Jesus' person is the persistent concern of the document. The encyclical does not lose sight of the universality of God's saving love. Right from the beginning we read that "the redemptive event brings salvation to all, for each one is included in the mystery of redemption" (RM 4). All relevant elements of the Council theology are taken up in the encyclical, but the approach is different: the Council proceeds from the comprehensiveness of God's saving love to its realization in Jesus Christ; the encyclical begins with the person of Jesus Christ in whom we find the full depth and breadth of human life and human community.

Both approaches are legitimate, both have also their dangers. We have seen the dangers of the Council approach: they were the reason for the Pope's serious concerns. Deviations in theology must be avoided, the integrity of the Christian message must be safeguarded. However one may ask whether it was necessary to change the presentation of the Council and to return to the approach of earlier theology: to begin with the person of Jesus Christ, the only Saviour. For this approach has its dangers, too. In retrospect we

have become aware of the serious deviations which darkened many chapters in our history: for centuries the centrality of Jesus Christ has blinded many Christians to the treasures of wisdom and beauty bestowed by God on people of other cultures; it led many to negative, often deeply offensive attitude towards other religions; it could bring about a spirit of superiority in Christian nations alien to the spirit of Jesus. Instead of following Jesus Christ who came not to be served but to serve, Christians became, in his name, masters and lords. When new continents were "discovered" we celebrate the fifth centenary this year Christians became not only evangelizers but also conquerors, exploiters and even destroyers of other nations. None of these misconceptions, to be sure, are found in the encyclical, and today most Christians have discarded them. But they have done most serious harm to the image of Christians. We must be sensitive to the deep and near-universal trauma and distrust which these attitudes have created among our non-Christians as well. Moreover, Christians live today in a pluralistic society and must understand their faith in a world of Advent; and we, believers "who have received the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons" (Rom 8:23). We must live our faith in solidarity with the entire human family waiting for final salvation. Our faith, our message, consists in the assurance that this groaning for salvation has been answered by God in Jesus Christ. This faith is God's gift to us; for all it is an invitation to turn to him in trust and faith and so to be drawn towards the final fulfillment in God.

If we live in solidarity with our world we may sense with our brothers and sisters the difficulty to understand the message of the "one mediator Jesus Christ" so that "no one can enter into communion with God except through the working of the Holy Spirit" (RM 5). Have their mystics not come close to God? They will be happy to read in the encyclical that "God enlightens (all people) in a way which is accommodated to their spiritual and material situation," but will be puzzled when the text continues, "this grace comes from Christ, it is the result of his sacrifice and is communicated by the Holy Spirit" (RM 10). The Council had been aware of the communion of Jesus Christ with the entire human family; at the same time it knew that the articulation of this relationship is beyond the reach of theology: "In a manner known only to God the Holy Spirit offers to every man the possibility of being associated with the paschal mystery" (GS 22; RM 6).

Our question is pastoral: Faith in Jesus Christ is the gift of God's grace. We wish and pray that this gift become the life spring for many people who search for God and for our broken human family. How can this mystery of God's love, coming to us in Jesus Christ, be offered to the modern world the vast world which no longer lives in a closed Christian atmosphere or has never known Christ? The Council has attempted to do this. The encyclical found the approach too dangerous and returned to the earlier approach. Perhaps one could suggest that in the presentation of the Christian message to the modern world there could be closer collaboration with churches which are struggling with the problems of a pluralistic society; that we should never drift apart in an atmosphere of distrust and suspicion. We believe in the working of the Holy Spirit in all churches, especially in those which are still struggling and searching for the appropriate articulation of their faith in Jesus Christ.

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## Chair in Christianity Becomes Department

Through the memorandum of agreement signed on March 6, 1992 between the University of Madras and the Archdiocese of Madras-Mylapore, the existing Chair in Christianity at the University of Madras, has been raised to a full-fledged University Department of Christian Studies.

*The Department's objectives are:*

1. To promote study and research in Christianity in an open intellectually stimulating environment;
2. To promote dialogue among intellectuals of different religions;
3. To offer courses in interdisciplinary areas of research, such as religion and psychology, religion and the social sciences, religious pluralism, Eastern and Western approaches to theology and spirituality.

The newly instituted Department of Christian studies will offer Ph.D., M.Phil. and M.A. degrees in Christian Studies. There have been Ph.D. research scholars ever since the inauguration of the Chair in 1984. From the academic year 1992-1993 the Department will offer a one-year full-time course M.Phil. in Christian Studies. (The M.A. programme will start in 1993-1994.) Admission is limited. Interested candidates may contact: Head, Department of Christian Studies, Archbishop's House, 21 Santhome High Road, Madras 600 004.

(Concluded on p. 277)

## Mission from a South Asian Perspective of Justice and Human Rights

Paul CASPERSZ

Reflecting on the concept of mission in the Asian situation the Satyodaya founder (30, Pushpadana Mawatha, Kandy, Sri Lanka) stresses that mission is intimately related to context, and that in Asia the context of a colonial history, mass poverty and religious wealth implies that like the mission of Jesus the Christian mission be primarily directed to the liberation of the poor in a spirit of cooperation with all the religious and spiritual forces of the continent, and that the Church needs still to become a Church of the poor.

**F**ortunately for the present writer, *Vidyajyoti* is a 'Journal of Theological Reflection.' To a theological journal contributions would have to be professionally theological; therefore, presumably written by practising theologians. In a journal of theological reflection any attempt, presumably, to reflect, on human experience in the light of religious belief and practices would be legitimate. It is on the presumption of this legitimacy that these reflections on Christian Mission are made and submitted.

Do Christians have a mission? Are they sent out by the impulse of their religious beliefs with any sort of mandate to the society around them? Indeed, mission is as inescapable to any other religious person as it would be to a Christian. It is a mission that is certainly secondary to the mission that springs from the fact of being a human being. If the prime mission comes from the fact of one's humanity, the second comes from the fact that one is from this or that religious persuasion. In the present case, which will probably be the case of most of the readers of this Journal, it comes from the fact that one is a Christian.

### The Context of Mission

The next step would be to discuss and to decide upon the content of mission. One is sent on a mission to say and to do something. What

is that thing? In order to answer intelligibly, there is an earlier question to be asked, and answered. Where is one being sent on the mission? Where is one proclaiming oneself to be a Christian? For the present writer, as probably for most of the readers of this Journal, the answer would be that one is being sent on the mission in South Asia, that one proclaims oneself to be a Christian in South Asia. Hence, as a necessary prelude to the examination of the content of mission, one must examine the South Asian reality in the light of the unforgettable fact that one is a Christian in that reality and in no other. One is not a Christian in Rome or London or Moscow or Washington, one is in Delhi or Kandy, or, more likely, in one of the several hundred thousand villages of South Asia.

The Asian reality is a complex, even an enigmatic one, even for us who live in South Asia and have breathed its air from the day of our birth. But for the purpose of our present reflections, there are two things that stand out in the South Asian reality within which we are called upon to be Christian. The first is the poverty of South Asia. The second is the depth, the agony and the ecstasy of its millennial religious experience.

South Asia's economic poverty is so evident that little need be said about it and oft-quoted precise statistics of per capita income and income distribution, malnutrition, infant mortality, life expectancy, female deprivation need not be repeated here. Sri Lankan President Premadasa recently said that the SAARC leaders represent nearly one billion people, half of whom would be poor. It was, if anything, an understatement. Yet, if even half the population goes to bed inadequately fed, the other half should not sleep in peace. If sleep comes unsoundly for the other half of South Asia, there should be only nightmares for the less than one-third of the world that goes to bed each night over-supplied and over-fed.

It must be admitted that much of the poverty of South Asia is endogenous. There is far too much internal mismanagement, inefficiency, sloth and corruption. The high hopes that some of us had in Asia and Africa in the immediate postwar years of new independence have in most cases proved to be cruel illusions. The brown sahibs have not been better than the white whom they replaced, and have sometimes been worse. They have made money illegally and have used mediaeval torture methods against their political opponents and sometimes against ordinary innocent people who stood in the way of their ambitions. But there is equally no doubt that there are potent exogenous factors too: the legacy of colonialism and continuing neo-colonialism. In any exercise of Christian mission in a world in which

the minority rich are in what are considered to be Christian countries and the majority poor are in non-Christian countries, the exogenous factors simply cannot be overlooked.

The endogenous interacts and interlocks with the exogenous. But the exogenous factors promoting the poverty of South Asia (and the Third World generally) are more decisive and provide the ideal ground for the endogenous factors to breed and prosper. Indeed, what prospers most in the contemporary world economic system is poverty: the absolute poverty of many millions in South Asia (and the Third World) and the relative poverty understood as the gap in income levels between the rich and the poor countries. It is high time that the Christians of South Asia, led by their Church leaders, took it as their mission to stand up and tell the Christians of the West, led by the leaders in Rome, Canterbury and Geneva, "As long as you refuse to change, we shall continue to be poor."

## Colonialism

Because of centuries of colonialism, colonized countries became producers and exporters of primary commodities and the colonizing countries became producers and exporters of manufactured goods. But the prices of both the primary commodities and the manufactured goods are fixed by the colonizing countries. It need hardly be said that the prices of primary commodities are low while the prices of the manufactured goods are high. Thus international trade between the few rich countries of the world and the many poor countries is inherently iniquitous and unjust.

Efforts made by various UN agencies such as UNCTAD in successive postwar "development decades" to raise the prices of primary commodities have been resisted by the western developed (Christian) nations. What is not perhaps sufficiently realized is that all the jargon about low absolute prices and lower relative prices and deteriorating terms of trade for commodities such as tea and jute mean, at the grass roots, emaciated children and mentally stunted youth. Our reaction should be in the tones of Amos, but is it? And if not, are we fulfilling our Christian mission?

On the one hand, there is more world awareness of the inequities of international trade and the oppression within the patterns of trade of the poor countries of the world. On the other hand, the scandalously highly paid UN, World Bank and IMF officers and several Nobel economics laureates have failed decade after decade to rectify the injustice. The basic reason is that the entire UN system and its allies

particularly the infamous Siamese twins, the IMF and the World Bank are propped up by the rich countries of the world, chiefly the United States. And never in history have the rich shown that they have, or even can have, the interests of the poor at heart.

It is in this situation that Christian mission in Asia has to be exercised. In his recent encyclical John Paul II speaks of "major turning points" in the history of humanity which have encouraged "missionary outreach" to which "the Church, guided by the Spirit, has responded . . . with generosity and farsightedness" (*Redemptoris Missio*, no.30). One of the major turning points was "the evangelization of the Americas" (*ibid.*) of which the five hundredth anniversary is celebrated this year. It is part of our Christian mission in the colonized part of the world to recall to the Christian conscience of the west in the centenary year the costs of the colonization of the Americas from the time of Columbus's fateful planting of the royal banner of Spain in Guanahani, one of the Bahama Islands, on 12 October 1492: the 15-20 million Indians who perished at Spanish hands, the destruction of ancient civilizations and cultures, the open pillage and plunder of indigenous wealth.

The Catholic Bishops of the United States in their Pastoral on the occasion of the Columbus quincentenary acknowledge this other side of the evangelization of the Americas:

As Church, we have often been unconscious and insensitive to the mistreatment of our Native American brothers and sisters and have at times reflected the racism of the dominant culture of which we have been a part. In this quincentennial year, we extend our apology to the native peoples and pledge ourselves to work with them to ensure their rights, their religious freedom and the preservation of their cultural heritage.

They proceed to outline what have to be the necessary elements of the Christian mission in the non-Christian areas of the world:

The encounter with the Europeans was a harsh and painful one for the indigenous peoples. The introduction of diseases to which the Native Americans had no immunities led to the death of millions. Added to that were the cultural oppression, the injustices, the disrespect for native ways and traditions that must be acknowledged and lamented. The great waves of European colonization were accompanied by destruction of Indian civilization, the violent usurpation of Indian lands and the brutalization of their inhabitants. Many of those associated with the colonization of the land failed to see in the natives the workings of the same God that they espoused. Confronted with a vastly different culture, European Christians were challenged to re-examine how their own culture shaped their faith. Often they failed to distinguish between what was crucial to the Gospel and what were matters of cultural preference. That failure



brought with it catastrophic consequences for the native peoples, who were at times forced to become Christian (Pastoral Letter, *Heritage and Hope*, November 1990).

It is true that in Asia the ravages of colonialism were not as intense as in the Americas. It is not that colonialism was kinder in Asia, but that it faced stronger opposition from proud and self-confident indigenous religious cultures. It is also true that colonialism brought some important advantages to the colonized societies: the principle of the equality of all persons before the law (especially in British colonial territories), political unity, some enlightened Christian missionary enterprise that rejected European cultural domination and respected the indigenous cultures. But, when the advantages are weighed against the disadvantages, there can be little doubt that colonialism was perverse and injurious to the free development of colonized peoples. The poverty of the colonial peoples is therefore not mere economic poverty but the poverty of disinheritance. It is in this context that Christian mission has to be exercised in Asia.

### South Asian Religious Experience

The second major feature of the context in which Christian mission has to be exercised in Asia is that of its millennial religious experience. Some of this religious experience—the sacramental experience of the universe, sometimes called animism, Hinduism, Buddhism—is pre-Christian. By far the greater part of this experience—Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim—is non-Christian. Over centuries these religious ways of life penetrated very deeply, both in extent and in intensity, all aspects of the life of the people. They were undoubtedly the ways along which the ever-present Spirit and the Word of God guided millions and millions to salvation. Along these ways, in thousands of villages, each with its temple or mosque or little wayside place of cult, people found reasons to contend with the hardships of life and found their own identity as a people. Loyalty to these religious ways of life became part of the loyalty to their own country and to their own humanity. It was a loyalty so strong that it was able to make allowance for, and transcend, the weaknesses and even the aberrations of these traditions: the disadvantages of low castehood in Hindu culture, the depreciation of the female over large areas of Islamic culture and religious legitimization of feudal exploitation of the peasants everywhere. It is an aspect of reality which should deeply influence Christian mission and ensure its proceeding not along the paths of arrogant, self-conceived superiority, but along the paths of humility.

and pilgrimage. The pilgrim has not arrived but is always on the way.

## The Mission of Jesus

To know the context of mission is already to know the content, implicitly. The context is the content. Yet it is perhaps necessary to make the content explicit. Jesus himself in the context in which he exercised his own mission made it explicit. The incident never fails to inspire. He was then a young man not yet thirty, and at the beginning of his public career. On a Saturday he went to synagogue in his native little town of Nazareth. There he made his programmatic manifesto:

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me,  
for he has anointed me.  
He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor,  
to proclaim liberty to captives  
and to the blind new sight,  
to set the downtrodden free,  
to proclaim the Lord's year of favour (Luke 4:18).

The pericope is the most important of all for any theology of justice, human rights, liberation. It has been commented upon in many places by many persons in contemporary times. The context in which Jesus spoke and an analysis of the content make it crystal clear that Jesus meant really and truly what the words at first sight indicate: justice and compassion in inter-human relations, giving the people their God-given rights to freedom and happiness, liberation from all forms of oppression.

To the present writer there is no question at all about the interpretation of the text in this manner. The question is how for so many of his generation the text was ever capable of any other interpretation. It was heard many times in private and public reading, even though the present writer does not recall one instance during the whole period of his "formation" when the text was the theme of any day of recollection, triduum or annual retreat. Either the text was given a brief other-worldly interpretation, or it was conveniently placed among the less consequential verses of the Gospels. The question would only be of historical importance if not for the fact that those who received their "formation" in that earlier period still largely hold the reins of direction in the Church and, more or less consciously, prevent the only meaning and thrust of the text to emerge, to electrify and to change the order of things.

There are other texts too which have to be similarly rehabilitated. The Magnificat and the Benedictus are touching songs of a people crying for deliverance from hunger and poverty and from political oppression. The Beatitudes, at least in the Lucan formulation, are strongly liberationist. Many of the parables - the Prodigal Son, the Lost Sheep - have as their main thrust not repentance but an invitation to espouse the cause of the oppressed, the outcaste, the victims of social injustice. Even in the prayer of Jesus called the Lord's Prayer there is a strong undertone of liberation. As in the instance of the programmatic manifesto at Nazareth, the difficulty does not lie in accepting the liberationist interpretation of these texts but in explaining why they took so long to receive that interpretation and why there are still so many in high places in the Church who resist it.

### The Church of the Poor

At least in the poor countries of the world, specially in those countries where the Christians are small minorities, there should be no hesitation about what the Christian mission should be. It is to take the Good News to the poor. The Church, said Pope John XXIII in his famous radio message to the world exactly one month before he declared the Second Vatican Council open, has to be the Church of all, but it has to be if it wants to be faithful to Jesus the Church especially of the poor. He called this the *punto luminoso* of his vision of what the Council had to achieve. In the event, while the Council achieved much that was wonderful, it did not achieve the making of the Church the Church especially of the poor.

That mission is left to the Christians who come from the poor countries of the world. By accepting that mission, is there a danger of reducing the Gospel message to a socio-political programme of justice for the oppressed and human rights for those whose rights are violated? The danger is neither more nor less than that to which Jesus himself was exposed. Jesus' socio-political programme was misunderstood to use modern language by extremists both on the right and on the left. The former wanted Jesus to desist from being a rabble rouser and a trouble maker. The latter wanted him to take the option of violence. Jesus obliged neither.

Jesus' commitment to justice (a key biblical concept, with which Jesus was familiar) and to human rights (also an old concept, though the language is that of our own day) is based on his vision of the whole of humanity and his own humanity as springing from the mind and heart of God. Hence humanity has the destiny of being according to

that mind and heart. The commitment of Jesus to justice is therefore inseparable from his commitment to God. If this leads him to a socio-political stance, it is because he has first taken a religious stance. He is committed to human justice because he is divine. The Christian mission in Asia today is to be as committed to justice and human rights as Jesus was.

What are we as Christians known for in Asia today? We are known for our schools and university colleges, in some countries for our hospitals, for certain standards of honest administration and for efficiency. We are certainly not known as a group which has taken an option for the poor. In our own Church circles we are hardly models of justice and human rights in regard even to those who depend on us for their living. We serve the rich and do not talk to them about their obligations to give the poor their due. We say we are the Church of all, and ignoring the plea of John XXIII, the Church does not accept that it has any special obligations to the poor. Dalit and tribal Christians may change this conception of the Church, but not yet.

So, when after the downfall of the totalitarian regimes of eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, international capitalism, championed by the IMF and the World Bank, is on the rampage throughout the world, advocating in all the poor countries of the world policies that pamper the elites and grind the poor to the dust, we remain silent. We do not realise sufficiently that inter-religious coalitions for justice and human rights are the best form of inter-religious dialogue, doing no violence to the freedom of conscience of each individual. Baptism is not only by water but also by desire, and millions of our people hungering for justice and human rights surely receive it. Along the paths of integrity and justice, we shall all come to know God better and proceed as the Spirit leads us on. Otherwise, we may call our people to the ways of God. But that God would not be the God of Jesus of Nazareth. The God of Jesus and the God in Jesus is a God of justice and of a love of predilection for the poor. It is from him alone that we must receive our mission.

## Paul and Mission

Paddy MEAGHER

In the context of today's reflection on mission and proclamation Fr P. Meagher, Scripture Professor at the Vidyajyoti Faculty, surveys Paul's understanding of mission based on his own conversion experience, on his Jewish roots and above all on his insight into the reality of God himself as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Such a theocentric perception will inspire an authentic theology of mission.

**W**hen we listen to the Gospels we hear how different men thought about and understood Jesus, his mission, his teaching and the responsibility and guidelines for mission which he gave to the believing community. Paul does not write about Jesus' or the community's mission: he is totally immersed in it because his very self-identity is submerged into what God has done in Jesus Christ the Lord. On his visiting card we read: "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the Gospel of God" (Rom 1:1). Looking back over about twenty years of his life he writes: "... and so it is that, as a man united to Christ Jesus, I have some reason to boast concerning the work done in the service of God. On the other hand, the only cases I venture to speak of are those in which it was I, myself, who was Christ's instrument in bringing the Gentiles into his allegiance, by word ... so that beginning at Jerusalem and making a wide sweep as far as Illyrium, I have brought to completion the preaching of Christ's Gospel" (Rom 15:17-19). Only his arrest in Jerusalem and later his death in Rome prevented him from fulfilling his projected desire (Rom 15:24) to be also a minister of Christ Jesus sent to the Gentiles, with God's Gospel for my 'priestly charge' (Rom 15:16) so that the people of Western Europe (Spain) would also become "an offering gladly accepted by God, one consecrated by the Holy Spirit" (Rom 15:16).

A major question is to determine the reason for Paul's understanding that "the Gospel of God" (Rom 1:1) is "the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to Jew first and also to Greek"

(Rom 1:16) Jew-Greek or Gentile signifies the whole human race) and to understand the need to proclaim the Gospel from his writings.

His own vocation is described in these simple yet profound words: "The time came when he who set me apart from my birth (Jer 1:5), he who, by virtue of his grace (total gratuity), sent out his call, saw fit to reveal his Son to me and through me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles . . ." (Gal 1:15-16). Reflecting on this experience he says: "For when I preach the Gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. It is simply a necessity which is laid on me (by God). It would go hard with me ('Woe to me') indeed were I not to preach the Gospel" (1 Cor 9:16). Paul has a profound sense of a responsibility entrusted to him by the God who revealed himself in Jesus Christ (1 Cor 9:17; 1 Cor 3:5-10; 4:1-2 ...). We do not need to seek any further for Paul's own personal involvement in mission. However, does the very nature of the Gospel of the God demand proclamation?

Some would judge that theological (ideological) opinions conditioned by contemporary history and culture explain Paul's belief in the universal saving role of Jesus Christ and the consequent necessity of proclamation. They would claim that Paul inherited Jewish monotheistic faith with its ethnocentrism, and exclusive beliefs and attitudes to other religions. Paul was also greatly influenced by a strong belief in the proximity of the final "Day of the Lord" and an apocalyptic world view. These aspects of his belief system would explain his understanding of the Gospel and mission.

We must admit that Paul shares traditional Jewish attitudes to other religions, which attitudes are clearly time-conditioned, non-ecumenical and negative. He refers to the ethical degradation of the Gentile world (1 Cor 6:9-11a ...). Apart from using the epithet "Gentile sinners" in distinction to Jews (Gal 2:15) he describes the intimate link between the refusal to worship the one God, the worship of deities represented in the form of "mortal man, birds, animals or reptiles" and sexual depravity and moral degradation (Rom 1:21-32). He refers to the non-Jewish sacrificial cult as "offered to demons and not to God" (cf. Deut 32:17; 1 Cor 10:19-22). He denies that the deities "so called gods, whether in heaven or on earth" have any real divine existence (1 Cor 8:4-5; Gal 4:8), contrasts idols to the living and true God (1 Thess 1:10) and refers to Gentiles as people who are in a state of pitiful bondage to beggarly elemental spirits (or to ineffective rudimentary teaching in the religions

(Gal 4:9). If we include Colossians as at least reflecting pauline thought, then many religious practices, festivals and devotions and teaching are basically emptied of any effective religious meaning because they are obstacles to truth, freedom and faith (Col 2:16-20; cf 2:8). We must also admit that he only borrows from the ethico-philosophical traditions which are independent of the religions (Phil 4:8-9; Gal 5:22; Rom 2:14-16).

Were Paul not to deny significant religious value to Judaism also, we could build an argument about his totally negative attitude to other religions. However, Paul relativizes Judaism as a religion in his classical statement: "And indeed, neither circumcision nor the want of it has any meaning for those who have united themselves to Christ Jesus" (Gal 5:6; 6:15). Dealing with other religions he dismisses them in relationship to 'the living and true God', while Judaism is radically relativized in the light of the Christ event 'the new creation' (Gal 6:14). The Christ event refers to Jesus' life, death and resurrection especially his death and resurrection. Paul also includes the Jewish world inside the morally depraved human community (Rom 2:17.24 at least; Rom 3:9-20) and associates the Law in its origin and nature or the quality of its teaching with the elemental spirits/elementary teaching (Gal 4:3; cf. 3:19) and associates it dangerously close to Sin and Death (Rom 7:4-6; 7:7-8:3; cf. 5:20). He also refers to and repudiates the value of his Jewish cultural-religious heritage in savage terms (Phil 3:2.4-8.19). This attitude to Judaism can help us to understand his attitude to other religions and not draw wrong conclusions.

However, he has also a clearly appreciative attitude to Judaism and the Law, a deep sense of pride and gratitude (Rom 9:1-5; 10:1-2; 11:17-24) and a readiness to praise and accept the Law (1 Cor 9:19-20; Rom 7:7-12). While we have evidence of his more balanced and positive attitude to Judaism, we do not have any clear evidence of his having reflected upon other religions in themselves. Moreover, his attitude to both other religions and Judaism is found in polemical contexts in which basic aspects of God's saving action in Jesus Christ and its fundamental consequences are at stake. This attitude to other religions basically reflects his Jewish heritage.

Paul's Jewish belief system has undergone some major changes. Into the pure monotheism which he inherits ("there is no God but one" [1 Cor 8:4; cf. Rom 3:30] and "from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory for ever" [Rom 11:36] and "God, who is over all, be blessed for ever" [Rom 9:5]) he must in-

corporate Jesus Christ the Lord so that his faith finds this expression: "... for us there is one God, the Father, *from* whom all things and *for* whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, *through* whom are all things and *through* whom we exist" (1 Cor 8:6; see Col 1:15-18a). He also includes the Spirit as we find in his blessing formula: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Cor 13:13).

Possibly a far more tangible shift affects Jewish ethnocentrism and exclusivism. The rigid boundaries, be they religious, ethnic, socio-economic or gender related, are destroyed in the light of sharing in the Christ event which is a new creation (Gal 3:28; 1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:1). Though Judaism was aware of the universal plan of God, yet in Paul's thought Jewish privilege is removed, except the historical priority, and God is utterly impartial (Rom 1:14.16; 2:9-11; 3:22.29.30): "There is no distinction between Jew and Gentile; the same Lord (Jesus) is Lord of all and bestows his riches upon all who call upon him" (Rom 10:12). Both Jew and Greek are sinners and equally lack God's glory (Rom 3:9.22) and are led astray, seeking signs or wisdom and are scandalized by Christ crucified (1 Cor 1:22). In Christ God reaches out to both (Rom 3:22; 1 Cor 1:23-29). The historical priority and privileges of the Jews are acknowledged and used to deflate a dangerous arrogance among Roman Gentile Christians (Rom 11:17-24). The end result is to relativize the historical and cultural and shift our attention solely to God and to what he has done in Christ and its consequences for the understanding of God's universal saving purpose.

Paul does use aspects of an apocalyptic world view to articulate his understanding of God's action through Jesus in history and his reading of the OT. He also affirms a clear belief in the proximity of the Day the Lord or the Parousia of Jesus Christ (1 Th 1:10; 1 Cor 7:29-31) which plays such an important role in his understanding of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 15:24-28), his ethical instructions and prayers (1 Th 3:13; 5:2-5; 5:23; Phil 1:10; 1 Cor 1:8; Rom 13:12-13) and his own apostolic life (1 Th 2:19; Phil 2:16). Obviously this adds urgency to his apostolic activity and journeys.

The basic affirmation that the history of God's saving activity has culminated in Jesus Christ's death and resurrection and effected a radically new situation for the human community and the cosmos is articulated with the help of aspects of an apocalyptic world view. There is an inherent tension in his basic affirmation because of the "already" and "not yet" dimension of God's saving action. How-



ever, I do not judge that the apocalyptic world view or the belief in the proximity of the Parousia explain the ultimacy of God's action in Jesus Christ for all history and the consequent imperative of apostolic proclamation of the Gospel of God. The significance of Jesus' death and resurrection and Paul's experience of God revealed in Jesus Christ, the Son, alone finally account for his understanding of the Gospel of God and the necessity that it be proclaimed to all.

We must now develop Paul's understanding of what God has done in and through Jesus Christ because it is here that we find the basis for his understanding of mission.

We could begin with the phrase "the Gospel of God" (Rom 1:1; 15:16) which is "the power of God for the salvation of everyone who has faith, Jew first then Greek" (Rom 1:16). The beginning and end of all Paul's thought is the historical action of God the Father. Many readers would be aware of the centrality of God's action in Paul's understanding of Jesus Christ. The initiative is always God's, who acts to achieve his saving purpose in and through Jesus Christ. The whole Christ event (the Gospel) has its origin in God's love, his utterly gratuitous decision. The Gospel is fundamentally the proclaimed account of what God the Father has done. The culmination of the whole Christ event takes place "when he (the Son) delivers the Kingdom to God the Father . . . . When all things are subject to him (the Son), then the Son himself will also be subject to him who puts all things under him (Son), that God may be everything to everyone" (1 Cor 15:24-28). Pauline thought begins with "God sent his Son" (Rom 8:3; Gal 4:4) and ends with the Son delivering all to the Father.

This action of God not only belongs to his continuous involvement in human history through the Jewish people but also is characterized as being climactic and ultimate in its nature. These phrases referring to God's action and read in their contexts, are important in this regard: "which he promised beforehand through the prophets . . ." (Rom 3:21), "although the law and the prophets bear witness to it" (Rom 3:21), and "when the time had fully come . . ." (Gal 4:4). The climactic and ultimate nature of what God has done in and through Jesus Christ is expressed in many other ways. Paul describes the human situation into which Jesus entered in abstract yet ultimate and all-embracing terms. The human community, left to itself as "flesh" is enslaved by *sin*, destined to condemnation which will be in the form of the ultimate and inescapable victory of *death* (Rom 7:23-24; 8:2; 5:21; 1 Cor 15:24-26.54-56). All the experi-

ences we have personally and as a race of the destruction of the human person, society and the cosmos and our basic helplessness in the face of evil (personal and structural sin) are summarized by Paul in the terms of Flesh, Sin and Death.

The religious endeavours of the human, be they spelt out in belief systems, cult and devotions or ethical teaching, are in themselves powerless to liberate any person and much less the human family from the destructive power of evil. Paul expresses this fact in a concrete and historical manner by relativizing the Law (Judaism as religion) and its underlining impotence to strike at the root of evil's power. He explains himself in these words: "What the Law weakened by the flesh could not do" (Rom 8:3). The flesh itself is helpless, dominated by the "law of sin and death" (Rom 8:2-3). In another passage he says: "The sting (deadly power) of death is sin, and the power of sin is (displayed) in the Law" (1 Cor 15:56; cf. Rom 7:7-24). This fundamentally helpless situation of the human family is implied also in the way Paul relates the whole human race to Adam and to Sin and Death (Rom 5:12-19; 1 Cor 15:22). There are other ways also in which Paul describes the desperate nature of the human situation in abstract yet basic terms, one of which is the simple word "poor" (2 Cor 8:9). For other descriptions we could include Rom 3:9-23, Gal 1:4, 3:13, 4:3-5.8 and 2 Cor 5:21.

In the death and resurrection of Jesus Paul sees God entering and transforming, in that way in which only God can, the desperate and hopeless human situation. This is crucial to understand Paul's God. In a variety of ways he will describe this recreative action of God, using terms from different backgrounds, especially the sacrificial. The boldness of some expressions must strike us, as for example: "For our sake he made him who knew no sin *to be sin* (sin offering)" (2 Cor 5:21) and "God . . . has done what the Law . . . could not do, sending his own Son in the *likeness of sinful flesh* and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh . . ." (Rom 8:3). We list some of the descriptions of God's action. God *justifies* through the *redemption* which is in Christ Jesus whom God put forward as *expiation* through his blood" (Rom 3:24-25), and God "*was reconciling* the world to himself in Christ" (2 Cor 5:19, cf. Rom 5:10). God is also the source of the *new creation* through Christ (2 Cor 5:17-18), the gift of Sonship instead of slavery (Gal 4:4-6; Rom 8:14-17) and the Spirit (2 Cor 1:22; Gal 4:6...). Finally, God effects human and cosmic *resurrection* and *glorification*, namely the total and permanent transformation of reality by which he will be all in all. The

cosmos is healed, Sin and Death destroyed and the human family absorbed into the divine family (Rom 8:17-30; 1 Cor 15:54-57). We can understand Paul's spontaneous and intensely grateful shout as he looks at the world and God active in Jesus Christ: "Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 15:57), and, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ" (Rom 7:25).

We would need to comment upon many points in these texts to bring into focus their significance and explain their meaning. What we wish to emphasize is the helplessness of the human situation, the radical character of the transformation, its universal applicability and its ultimate nature.

We can look at the Christ event from another angle. God is uncovered. We know the "heart" of God who did not spare even his Son (Rom 8:32) despite our rebellion (Rom 5:7-8) so that, despite any type of experience, we are able to confidently to say: "I am fully convinced of this that nothing in either death or life (this encompasses all). . . in fact that there is not anything in all creation which shall have the power of separating us from the love of God which comes to us in *Christ Jesus*" (Rom 8:38-39). At key points Paul will underline the gratuity and graciousness of God revealed in Christ (Rom 3:24; 5:15-21; 2 Cor 6:1; Gal 1:6; 5:4). He unfolds the liberating love of Christ (Gal 2:20) within "the will of our God and Father" and emphasizes how faithful and true God has been to all his promises and to his very self because of the revelation of his righteousness (God creating the basic relationship between himself and the believer in accord with his commitments) in Jesus' death and resurrection (Rom 1:17; 3:21-30). The scandalous weakness and foolishness of God also become part of human consciousness in the crucified (1 Cor 1:21-25). In this we have the basis for a pauline preferential option for the poor of history. Finally, the power and glory of God break through into our history in an overpowering way in and through the resurrection of Jesus (2 Cor 4:6; Phil 2:9; 3:10,21).

This leads us to look at whom God has said Jesus to be. In a few very personal lines Paul describes the central religious experience of his life. By the time he wrote these autobiographical lines the full dimensions of the initial experience had crystalized, fed by nearly twenty years of experience. Emphatically underlining the exclusive gratuitous and purposeful action of God (Gal 1:15 . set apart, call, grace, please [Gal 1:1; 11-12]) he says God "revealed his son to (in) me in order that I may preach him among the Gentiles" (Gal 1:16). Paul states that God broke into his life in a way which he alone can do and in a way which left no doubt that he was acting.

What did he "teach" Paul? That Jesus, who was crucified and died on that cross, was the person in human history in and through whom God was present and acting for the life of the whole human community. This is a valid way to unpack that phrase "*revealed his Son to me.*" The word "Son" uncovers for us God telling us that in the person dying on the cross, he is present and active. The fact that in and through the crucified Jesus God is immersed in our history can be grasped and affirmed only in the experience of Jesus as risen. Jesus can only be known as living through an experience of God, whose power and love reaches out into *all* human history and into the *depths* of human life and history in a way which is so exclusively divine that it expresses the very depths of God, the "who" and "why" of Jesus, God's purpose for history, and the ultimate meaning of human life. The biblical God is uniquely the God who enters human history to heal and transform it and lead the human family and the cosmos to its fullness. In raising Jesus God reveals that he *exhausts*, as it were, his saving self-gift to the human family. Therefore, Jesus is called Son and Lord before whom the whole human family and the cosmos stand as they must before God himself (Phil 2:10-11). Each of these "names" can be described as "the name above all names." To purposely refuse to acknowledge these "names" would imply dishonouring God the Father (Phil 2:11). We shall return to the name Son.

Paul has another less obviously autobiographical text which indicates to us the place of Jesus within God's history with us. As in Galatians, he is concerned with the Gospel and his apostolic ministry which are so intertwined and causes of conflict. He defends himself: "... at least we do not, as so many others do, deal with the Word God like hawkers offering their wares. No ..." (2 Cor 2:17). He spells out the content of the Gospel "which tells of Christ's glory, which tells of him who is the very image of God . . . . We proclaim Christ Jesus as Lord . . ." (2 Cor 4:4b-5). What was the origin of this Gospel? He explains: "... it is the God who said 'Let light (divine power for life) shine out of darkness' who has shone into our hearts (core of a person) for the spreading abroad of the light sent forth by the revelation of God's glory, even as it is seen upon the face of Christ" (2 Cor 4:6). The choice of some terms, for example, glory, is determined by the context (2 Cor 3:7-18). The text is complex. There are two phrases of importance for our reflections, "glory of Christ who is the likeness of God" and "God's glory . . . upon the face of Christ." Glory here is not divinity as divinity but rather God experienced as the saving God within our history. A text will illustrate this. Paul says that Jesus' resurrection was ef-

fectured "by the glory of the Father" (Rom 6:4). Jesus shares the glory and likeness of the God who is committed to human history because in and through Jesus God acts, and Jesus is personally totally committed to God's saving work.

In another text which explains to us who Jesus is within and beyond history, Paul calls Jesus *Lord* (Phil 2:10-11). We could also develop the significance of the Adam-Jesus Christ relationship and in consequence Jesus' universal and ultimate significance.

We return to the name of Son because it has a special place in Paul not because it connotes divinity as such but because it reveals so much about God and Jesus' place in God's recreative work of love. The name "only Son," "Son of God in power," "his Son," like "Lord," can not be shared with anyone else. The Son is Judge of the world (1 Th 1:10). The dominion over all creation and the responsibility to bring all creation to God is entrusted to him as Son (1 Cor 15:24-28). All God's commitments find their final "yes" in him (2 Cor 1:19). Enslaved humanity is set free and reconciled through his coming and death (Gal 4:4-6; Rom 8:3; 5:10). He is the unshakable pledge of God's self-gift to us (Rom 8:32). The goal of human life is that we be united to him now (1 Cor 1:9; Gal 4:6; Rom 8:14), and moulded into the full likeness of the Son in total transformation at our resurrection (Rom 8:29 in context).

Therefore, Paul begins Romans with a concise summary of "the Gospel of God" which is the culmination and faithful realization of God's presence in history in terms of "the Gospel concerning his Son" (1:3). Two originating moments are described: his natural origin (David family) and his divine appointment. These are compared and evaluated. The first is a natural birth (flesh) by which he enters concrete human history (David descendant). The second is effected by divine power (Spirit holiness) by which he enters a new type of life as the risen one. Therefore, he is now given a new title, "Son of God in power," which is synonymous with Paul's usual use of Son and Lord.

The whole self-commitment of God to our history which can be summarized under the term "*charis*" is expressed in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, his Son. The name "Son of God" also incorporates all that God did in Jesus Christ. Paul personalizes all this in a passage which both indicates the core of his own inner life and the basis for all his apostolic ministry: "I have been crucified with Christ (symbol of radical break: cf. Gal 6:14). The life which I live now is no longer my own life. It is the life which Christ lives in me. My present life is a bodily one. Yet I live it by faith in the Son

of God, who loved me and surrendered himself for my sake. I will not set the grace of God at naught..." (Gal 2:19-20). This love of the Son and the "grace" of God are the basis of the apostolic mission in Paul, embracing all the human family, relativizing all religious traditions except the absolute need for the human person to reach out to God who, whatever be his name and however he be seen to be present, is always the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Were Paul to be confronted with the theology of religions and the acceptance of God's self-revelation through them, yet he would say that "Grace and Peace (terms which concisely express those gifts which are exclusively and ultimately of divine origin) come from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ who gave himself for (all) our sins to deliver us from the present evil age (human helpless without God) according to the will of our God and Father to whom be glory for ever and ever" (Gal 1:3-4).

Paul did not, however, ask the questions about the role of religions, nor how to both dialogue with religions and proclaim the love of God in Jesus Christ. He did not seek to combine the proclamation of the Gospel of his Son (namely God's radical transformation of all human history in and through the death and resurrection of his Son) and Jesus' own prophetic and recreative ministry affecting the socio-political, cultural and religious life of the human community. Paul would find unintelligible to separate Jesus and Christ or Jesus and Son and seek to build a theology of religions on such a basis. Jesus is always Jesus Christ, the Son who is Jesus. A further difficulty today is our experience and understanding of Christianity and the Church severed from the historical action of God made concrete in Israel and Judaism, and from the God of Israel who is the Father of Jesus Christ. There is a historical continuity in Paul which we have lost and so also possibly lost a key to a hermeneutic of Paul and religions. We have exposed an understanding of Paul's thought. We need to take the next and difficult step demanded by our situation in a multi-religious world and perform the task of hermeneutics. However, Paul does remind and challenge the Christian believers, that they cannot speak intelligibly about God as Christians unless God be the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and the God whose Gospel is "the Gospel of His Son." All other speech about God is speech about a truncated God who is really an idol for in idols we seek to find easy ways to live even an apostolic or theologian's life. Paul is not ashamed of the Gospel because it is the power and love and God effecting the recreation of human history for all on the same basis faith.

## **The Future of the Mission in the Hindi Belt**

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The Director of the Ishvani Kendra (P.O.Box 3, Pune 411 014) and Secretary of the CBCI Commission for Proclamation and Communication presents here an overview of and a reflection on the mission in North India. After a brief historical survey he analyses the composition of the Church and its missionary personnel and institutions in the region and outlines the trends in the mission work and the tensions likely to surface in the future. He then proposes a set of revised priorities of the coming century. This is an abridged version of the paper presented at the meeting of the bishops of the Hindi region in 1991.

**T**he limited response of the people and the failures and struggles of the missionaries seem to make the mission in the Hindi belt one of the most difficult in the world. The dynamics of evangelization are largely conditioned by the economic, political, social, cultural and religious realities of the people among whom they live and work. As these secular realities become more complex in the course of human progress, the mission of the Church also becomes more complex. The encounter between the missionaries and the people in northern India forms a bewildering story. The fruits of 400 years of missionary labour in the heartland of Hinduism are not encouraging, except among a few marginalized communities. Therefore the question: What is the future of the mission in the Hindi belt? The Christian message and the messengers are challenged by the people and their life situations. The Lord of history invites the Church to pause and reflect before she steps into the third millennium.

### **I. Ecclesiastical Realities in the Hindi Region**

In 1974 Walbert Buhlmann convincingly demonstrated that the centre of the world Christianity is shifting from the Atlantic region towards the Pacific region. At the end of the 19th century when mass conversions to Christianity began in the mission countries, 85% of the

Christians and 77% of the Catholic population were living in the Northern hemisphere. The Southern hemisphere had only 15% and 23% respectively. By the year 1960, the Catholic population had declined to 52% in the North and grown to 48% in the South. Twenty years later, they were 42% and 58% respectively. It is predicted that by the year 2000, 60% of the Christian population will be in Southern Hemisphere and the remaining 40% in the North. Buhlmann's conclusion was that the first Church (the Oriental Church) dominated the first millennium; the second Church (The Western Church) dominated the second millennium; the third Church (a new Church in the Southern Hemisphere) will most probably dominate in the third millennium (W. Buhlmann, 1976, 86-87; 129-160).

Christianity came to different regions of India during different periods. What was the impact of the missionary movements in North India? Is there a significant shift in any new direction? What is the future of the Catholic mission particularly in the Hindi belt?

### *1. The Syrian Church and its Link with the Mission in North*

The Syrian Church with its traditional claim to apostolic origin is the oldest Church in India. It had a rather isolated existence until its encounter with the Portuguese missionaries in the beginning of the 16th century. It constitutes now 25% of India's Catholic population of 13,424,000. Ten percent of India's Christians belong to the Orthodox Church. Today nearly 50% of the Indian priests and 60% of the Indian nuns are Malayalees and a large number from them are working in the dioceses of the North (O.Degrijse, 1984, 44-46). The future of the mission in the Hindi belt is closely linked with the missionary orientation of the South.

A major breakthrough in the missionary activity of the Kerala Church after Vatican II is the missionary movement of the Oriental churches to North India. The Syro-Malabar Church is entrusted with eight dioceses and an eparchy in the North.

As a part of this missionary movement to the North, various women religious congregations, which worked earlier only in Kerala, have in recent times moved out of Kerala to other regions of India and to other countries. The arrival of the Syro-Malabar missionaries in the North, without adequate preparation both on the side of the Syrian Church and the Latin Church, has created a new missionary situation characterized by blessings as well as tensions. Exaggerated claims of



identity of an individual or particular church linked with cultural realities which might have been valid in a different context in the past seem harmful to the mission of the Church in the present context. An adaptation of both churches to the living contemporary culture with a priority for the mission of Christ might help to evolve gradually a new *modus operandi*.

## 2. The Padroado Mission in the Hindi Region

The origin of the Catholic mission in the Hindi belt begins with the extension of the missionary activity of the Jesuit missionaries who had established their headquarters in Goa in the beginning of the 16th century. The Jesuits who arrived in Fatepur Sikri in 1580 established their headquarters at Agra in 1601. The Moghul emperor Akbar who had invited them for a dialogue gave them lands as well as money for their settlement. A church was built in 1604 at the initiative of Fr Jerome Xavier. Agra can be considered the cradle of Christianity in the Hindi speaking region. However, the Moghul patronage was discontinued by Shah Jahan. When the Moghul capital was shifted to Delhi in 1648 it attracted more people including Catholics. In 1650 there were 120 Catholics and they increased to 300 within a decade. The two churches that were built in Delhi were later destroyed during the invasion of India by Nadir Shah of Persia in 1739 (D'Souza, 1990, 3-8).

In 1620 the Governor of Patna who was a Muslim and had been an Ambassador of Jahangir to Goa earlier, where he became a Christian in 1610, imitating Akbar the Great invited the Jesuit missionaries to Patna. There were already a few Portuguese Catholics in his army. A small church was built here and the foundation for a Catholic community was laid. However due to the antagonism of some Muslims very little work was done. When the Capuchin missionaries arrived in Patna in 1706 on their way to Tibet, they found about 150 Catholics. A new chapel was built in 1715. However due to lack of priests and the insignificant number of Catholics little work was carried out until 1779 (*Ibid.*, 9).

Jesuit missionaries were in Rajasthan in 1619. The Rajput chief Raja Singh of Jaipur who was keenly interested in astronomy built observatories in Jaipur, Delhi, Mathura and Banares. In 1740 he invited two Jesuits who were well versed in astronomy to help him. The Raja himself met the expenses to build a church which attracted some Catholics to Jaipur. Though the new ruler himself did not encourage the missionaries to spread the Christian message, he used to attend the church services and donated money for the maintenance of the priests. However, after his death in 1743, the new ruler had no sympathy for

the Christians and the Christian community dwindled fast.

At Marwar, in M.P., the Raja sanctioned money to build a church and paid on allowance to maintain a resident priest to take care of Catholics who had migrated from Delhi and neighbouring States. However the mission here came to an end in 1778 when the new ruler persecuted the Christians who fled to Gwalior and Bhopal.

With the baptism of Begum Yohanna Samru from Islam in 1781, Sardhana, near Meerut, became an important centre of Catholic missionary activity in U.P. On the arrival of the Capuchins, after the suppression of the Jesuits in 1773, missionary activity in North India, under the leadership of the Begum, expanded and there were about 2,000 Catholics in Sardhana alone. Again it was the Begum who took all the initiative and spent large amount of money to build the Cathedral in Sardhana (1809-1822). With the appointment of Fr Julius Caesar Scotti as the first and last Bishop of Sardhana in 1834 its importance increased temporarily. The Begum left behind a large legacy of property and money for supporting various Catholic institutions established during her life. However after her death in 1836 the Christian community, instead of expanding, began to dwindle. The two month long Mutiny of 1857 rocked the Christian community. In 1904 the strength of the community was 1,100 (R.B. Sharma, 1988, 57-65). In 1826 a church was constructed in Meerut cantonment by the Begum, mainly for the European soldiers and civilians.

Another instance of a Catholic mission started with a royal patronage was the case of Bettiah, a small town in the extreme north of Bihar. Raja Dhurup Singh, whose sick wife was healed by a missionary, requested the Pope to send Capuchin missionaries to his State. The missionaries who came in 1742 put the foundation for the Bettiah mission. But it made little progress for the following 100 years.

Vicar Apostolic A. Hartmann's missionary zeal and enthusiasm during his stay and work for 30 years in Patna, from 1845-1886, excluding a few years of his stay in Bombay, increased the number of Catholics from 2000 to 5000. Most of the converts came from the Chamar caste.

If one looks at the Catholic mission in the Hindi-speaking belt for the first 400 years, it might appear a failure in terms of numerical conversions. Before the First World War the number of the Catholics in U.P. was only 1,238.

The Padroado mission in the Hindi belt can be described briefly as mission to the elite. It mustered royal patronage and influence with the

rulers. The result was a few individual conversions from the royal families and upper castes. Most of the Catholic mission centres were started for the soldiers, and other foreigners who had no roots in the local culture. Orphanages and charitable institutions also were sources of a small number of converts. The fate of many of these small communities were linked to the rise and fall of a particular ruler. The problem of a Christian community without real roots in the local culture continues, to some extent at least, even today. A good number of Christians, specially in the urban areas, are migrant workers.

### *3. The Adivasi/Tribal Missions*

The missionary efforts among the rulers and upper caste during the 17th and 18th century did not produce the expected results like conversions and baptisms in the Hindu and Muslim dominated North. Many missionaries were disappointed and gradually turned their attention to less privileged groups and simple communities which brought about the so-called "mass conversion movements" from the Dalits and tribals in some areas in the north.

The spectacular results of the mission work among the Adivasis of Chotanagpur is an illustrious example. A hundred and eight years ago, when the Catholic missionaries entered the Chotanagpur region, there were less than 50 Catholics. The mass conversion movement that was set in motion by the young Jesuit missionary Constant Lievens made history by converting nearly 75,000 Adivasis, mostly Mundas, Kharias and Oraons, during a short period of seven years. For the past century, evangelization work in Chotanagpur plateau has created a very vibrant and almost self-sufficient Church. At present 10% of the Catholic population of India is found in this zone. Eight Adivasi Bishops, hundreds of priests and a large number of Sisters are signs of a flourishing Church. By the year 2000 one should expect that a large number of priestly and religious vocations will be hailing from this new Church. A change in the structure of missionary personnel in the Hindi belt will be one of the major consequences. The transforming power of the gospel, both in the minds and hearts of the people and in the social structure, is very clear in the history of the mission among the Adivasis. Today's heavy pastoral activities to deepen the faith and consolidate the local Church tend to weaken the missionary spirit so evident in the pre-Independence era. Senior missionaries strongly feel that evangelization is not the first priority of this local Church. At the same time, the Chotanagpur Church, stands as a refutation of the accusation of the Church in India being westernized (A. Kanjamala,

1981, 329-43).

Inspired as well as challenged by the success of mass conversions in Chotanagpur and elsewhere, Catholic missionaries in Rajasthan, M.P., and other Hindi states tried to generate a mass movement among the tribals in their areas but they did not succeed. However, their efforts created small Christian communities among the tribals particularly among the Bhils and Bhilalas in Rajasthan and M.P. The French Capuchins at the beginning of the century and the Divine Word Missionaries after the First World War did pioneering work among the tribals.

#### *4. Mission Among The Dalits*

The 19th and 20th century mass conversion movements influenced also the untouchables/outcastes who constitute 16% of India's population. However the impact on the Dalits in the Hindi-speaking states was minimal as compared to other parts of India. While a mass conversion movement was going on among the tribals in the southern and eastern Bihar, some conversions also took place among the Chamars in north part of Bihar. The majority of the 50,000 Chamar Catholics in Bihar are concentrated in the Patna diocese. In all other dioceses of Bihar the Catholics are predominantly tribals.

Most of the Catholics in U.P. also come from the Dalits, predominantly Chamars. As noted earlier, mass conversion was never a significant feature of the U.P. church. Because of the untiring work and missionary zeal of the Capuchins and MSFS missionaries, some Dalit converts were also made in M.P. Two third of the Catholics in Khandwa Diocese are Bhalais. The neighbouring diocese, Nasik in Maharashtra, has most of its Catholics from the Mahar community.

Though 50% of the Christians in India are Dalits, in the Hindi-speaking region their number is not very large. Many of them feel that they continue to suffer socio-economic discrimination from the government and the Church. Though many of them embrace Christianity with the hope of improving their social status and economic condition, these goals are only marginally realised. The recent Dalit movement in the country has generated a new awareness, frustration as well as protest among many Dalit Christians. The impact of the Dalit Christian movement and revolt in South India is bound to have an impact on the Dalit Christians in the Hindi region ("Dalit Christian Struggle," July 1990, pp. 1,18).

The missionaries working with these communities express a sense of disappointment at the poor response. Since they lived on the margin

of the Hindu community, the Dalits are to some extent influenced by traditional Hindu beliefs and customs. The dominant castes never wanted them to practice Hinduism, nor did they allow them to accept and practice Christianity. The traditional dependence on the landlord is transferred to the missionaries after conversion. In a recent survey conducted in Khandwa Diocese, nearly half of the missionaries expressed the sad view that the Dalit Church has little future until and unless there is a radically new approach to them (A. Kanjamala, 1990). There are very few vocations to the priesthood and religious life from them. The Dalit Church and mission for the year 2000 is a question mark. Some missionaries feel they are in a declining Church.

A recent renewal in these areas is characterized by two main trends: a systematic efforts to build up Basic Christian Communities and the option made by a few religious, women and men, to live and work among the poor and marginalized in order to conscientize, organize, and empower them, and to participate in their struggle for development and human dignity. In many areas where the number of Christians is insignificant and the prospects of new conversion is dim a good number of missionaries are engaged in building basic *human* communities according to the values of the gospel.

## II. Evangelization Trends Towards AD 2000

### 1. *Characteristics of the Catholic population*

A few salient features of the Catholic Church in the Hindi region can be thus identified:

- a. It is an insignificant minority: hardly 0.45% of region, which has one third of India's population, is Catholic. Very little alteration in the structure of the community is likely to occur in the future.
- b. The majority belong to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, the latter constituting the larger proportion. The image created among the general public is that the Christian mission is for the Dalits and tribals, not for the caste people.
- c. Because the majority of the tribals own some land, they are economically a little better off. As almost all the Dalit converts are landless, their tendency is to depend on the Church and missionaries for economic help. This is, in some sense, a continuation of their past habit of dependency on the landlords.
- d. The Church leadership is not indigenous except among tribals. There is a danger of south India's domination in the local Church in the North. The social and cultural distances between the missionaries and

Catholic do not help to build communities and foster communion.

e. The Dalit Christians suffer from double discrimination: from the government which refuse job reservations, and from the Church where the influence of traditional caste mentality continues, often in a subtle manner.

f. Apart from establishing English medium schools, a debated apostolate, very little is done systematically to contact and influence the middle and upper strata of society. The need to rethink the missionary methods is urgent.

## 2. Missionary Personnel

In the past, *Propaganda Fide* entrusted different mission territories to different religious congregations. Most of the missionary activity was carried out by religious, though some diocesan priests too organized themselves to render similar services. With the promulgation of the Vatican II Decree on the Church's missionary activity, the primary responsibility of evangelization is entrusted to the local Church and the local Bishop. The function of overall supervision and coordination of missionary activity in India is not undertaken by any particular body with clear policies and authority to implement them. The CBCI Commission for evangelization has no legal power to coordinate and monitor missionary activity. No organization has inherited the overall supervision and coordination which was done by *Propaganda* in the past. This is a serious problem.

The decline of Church personnel in the first world is well known. The Indian government issues no more permits on new missionaries from abroad. The encouraging factor is that there is a steady increase of priestly and religious vocations in India and most of the missionary personnel working in the North are Indians. But the majority of these missionaries do not come from the local Church: they come from South India. For a more rational distribution of missionary personnel in India the Bishops as well as religious superiors in the Hindi region should animate and motivate more priests and religious from the South to come to the North where the need of personnel is more acute. It is said that certain responsible people in Kerala are *discouraging* missionary vocations for the Hindi belt.

## 3. Institutional Presence and Structures of Service

At the time of India's Independence there were only 6 dioceses in the Hindi region. In 1991 they have increased to 33. These include 6 Syro-Malabar rite dioceses which extended their missionary activities

to the North after the Vatican II. During the last 40 years the North Indian mission has witnessed tremendous institutional growth. For instance, the number of Christian colleges has grown from 8 in 1950 to 16 in 1990. Dispensaries have increased from 150 to 394 for the same period. The present number of Catholic hospitals is 119 with a fourfold growth during the last 40 years (Ishvani Research, 1990).

Today there are 454 high schools in the region compared to 69 at the time of Independence. The growth of other Church institutions also follow the same trend. Because of the large number of Catholic institutions and the quality of services rendered to the public through these institutions, the Catholic Church's influence spreads beyond its numerical strength of about 0.5% in this area. The present trend indicates that the institutional expansion will be on the increase. There is a need to critically examine whether the Church is moving too much in the direction of institutionalization which might hinder its missionary contact with the people.

The development of Basic Christian Communities as an alternative to a huge Church organization is a contribution of the Latin America to the universal Church. In different parts of Asia like the Philippines and South Korea such communities are both the object and subject of evangelization. With very small number of Catholics, except in few areas, many missionaries in the North are taking as their priority building Basic Human Communities (CBCI Consultation, Hyderabad, 1987). Slowly, but definitely, the people's movements are gaining momentum. The shape of the mission of the future will most probably develop along this line. Following the example of her founder, the Church should become a servant Church in the sense that she should be at the service of the wider society, especially those most urgently in need.

#### *4. Trends in Mission Theology and Methods of Evangelization*

Msgr Kaut, President of *Missio*, recently observed that "in no concept has the Church undergone greater changes within the past decades than in the concept of Mission" (*Missio*, no. 24, 1987, p. 20). The change in the mission theology since Vatican II is so radical that many people speak of a crisis in mission. Others think that the crisis in the mission is a Western problem and there is not much of a crisis in Asia and Africa. One cannot deny the fact of a paradigm shift. In the past, mission theology had its deductive methodology which started "from above." Today the mission theology is characterized by an

inductive methodology starting "from below." "Today the starting point in theologizing is the consideration of the created cosmos, humanity, the current socio-political situation of the time and place and history" (L.J. Luzbetak, 1989, p. 115). A change in emphasis also introduces certain changes in the identity of the mission and in methods of evangelization. The Third World theology a new phenomenon is seen by some as a challenge and a threat to the traditional European theology.

The Christian mission in the Hindi belt is constantly challenged by the established religious systems of Hinduism and Islam. After a prolonged experience of confrontation, obstacles and failures, the major method of evangelization is now Christian witnessing. An authentic and radical following of the gospel is itself a challenge both to the missionaries and to the people among whom they live and work.

From the middle of the 20th century, under the influence of the comparative study of religions, dialogue with the world religions is seen as a form of proclamation. The Council has acknowledged that there exist in them "elements which are true and good (OT 16), "elements of truth and grace" (AG 9). The dialogue of religions is no more an option but an obligation (AG 11-12). "Any sense of mission not permeated by such a dialogical spirit would go against demands of true humanity and the teaching of the Gospel," says a recent document from the Secretariat for Non-Christians. (*The attitude of the Church towards the followers of other religions*, 1984, no.29). In India during the last 20 years, a large amount of literature has been produced on the theme of inter-religious dialogue. However, the missionaries who are systematically engaged in dialogue are very few. The ministry of dialogue faces a challenge: the relation between proclamation and dialogue is not clear to many in the hierarchy as well as among missionaries. For those missionaries who put emphasis on the traditional theology of mission, dialogue is only a means. There are others for whom dialogue is a form of proclamation and is an end in itself. The tension between these two schools is bound to continue during the coming decade.

Faced with existential problems of poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy, illness, a large number of missionaries spend a major part of their resources, energy and time in the service of the poor. After the Council, the highest number of Church documents and encyclicals were promulgated on justice, peace and development. In the Indian context where service to the underprivileged seldom goes beyond the narrow caste boundaries, service to suffering humanity is a unique



contribution which the Christian mission makes. The appreciation which the Government as well as people of all religions show for missionaries working with the poor is a clear sign that Christianity will continue to make special impact through its option for the poor. The international recognition and the awards bestowed upon Mother Teresa speak volumes for the orientation the mission should take in this region which has some of the most underdeveloped states in the country. More and more missionaries will be working for the liberation and the humanization of the poor during the coming decades. At the same time missionaries should become aware that too much action, without proper reflection and contemplation might end up in frustration. Missionaries can cooperate and collaborate with the secular movements and all people of good will without being secularized by them.

The "All-India Seminar on the Church in India Today," Bangalore 1969, the "International Theological Seminar on Mission Theology and Dialogue," Nagpur 1971, and the "All-India Consultation on Evangelization" at Patna 1973 repeatedly emphasized that the missionary spirit should be fostered, that courses in missiology should be part of seminary curricula, that a text-book should be compiled on mission theology, and more personnel should be sent from the Southern regions to the North. It is true that more priests and sisters from the Syrian Church have moved into North India during the last 20 years. Yet there is a general feeling among the senior missionaries as well as the people that the missionary enthusiasm and the spirit of sacrifice and the love for the people are on the decline.

There are 20 Catholic Ashrams scattered over North India. Incorporating the Ashram spirit of simplicity of life, prayer and contemplation, these pioneers are trying to give a corrective image to the Christian mission. The Christian involvement in education, medical service, development activities and so forth fails to project the message that these activities are only signs and expressions of a deep experience of God and the love of neighbour. Probably the number of those who opt for the Ashram and contemplative life will slightly increase. At present not even 1% of Indian religious, men and women, are in Ashram or contemplative life.

The use of the media for evangelization is on the increase. UNDA / OCIC, India, has currently about 100 members; probably only 10% come from the Hindi speaking region. Under the auspices of the CBCI Commission for Proclamation and Communication, UNDA / OCIC offers systematic training in the use of mass media for evangelization. This sector will expand rapidly during the coming decades in spite of

the fact that it is expensive. The media culture is penetrating even the remote villages of India, creating a new value system, life style and psychology, particularly among the youth.

In the past, mission theology, mission policy and missionary involvement came almost exclusively from Europe and America. Today missionary institutions and theological publications from India are making their contribution towards the creation of a new mission theology to respond to the fast changing context. The missiological visions as well as practices of the 19th and 20th century, originated in Europe and North America, seem now inadequate in the context of strong and vibrant religious traditions, beliefs and practices in North India.

Indian theologians are sincerely trying to formulate an adequate mission theology for the emerging situation. Observing the rapid changes taking place in the missionary ethos of India, one European missiologist writes:

India has become the most important missionary country of the Third Church and this is but the beginning. We can foresee that in the future, India will be one of the most evangelizing countries. The apostolic potential of the Indian Catholic Church is more important than that of any other Third World Church. It can avail itself of the dynamism and spiritual wealth of the Indian people (O.Degrijse, 1984, p. 49).

### ***5. Tensions and Conflicts in the North Indian Church of the Future***

The Church and her mission are in a world which is fast changing. The crisis of the value system affects the mission. The transition from the traditional setup will naturally be accompanied by a painful stress. Some of the areas of tensions and conflicts in this process will be the following:

a. The tension between the local Church and the universal Church: During the past decades, the theology of the local Church and inculturation is gathering momentum (LG 22, 26; CD 11). Because by the year 2000 two thirds of the Catholics will live in the Southern Hemisphere, the traditional centre of ecclesiastical power will shift from Rome to the local churches. Rome will not easily give up the traditional system. This will lead to a situation of conflict between the universal Church and the local Church.

In the North Indian context, there will be tensions between particular churches, like the Syro-Malabar Church, the Syro-Malankara Church and the Latin Church. As the churches of Chotanagpur and

other regions are growing into their own local identity and strength, the conflict between these local cultures and the missionaries from the South will increase if adequate precaution is not taken. The formation of a viable and self-sufficient local Church in the Hindi region will be slow process.

b. The intensive institutionalization of the Catholic Church during the last 40 years is quite evident. While institutions are necessary to render effective services to the people, they can be also a hindrance towards a people-oriented involvement. Instead of going to the people, the missionaries may be tempted to sit in their comfortable institutions and expect the people to come to them. Not infrequently these institutions become centres of power and power rivalries within the Church. The financial resources for building many of these institutions come mostly from the West. In the past the foreign missionaries who came from these countries collected funds and spent them. In the future the funds might continue to flow from the West, but its use will be determined by the indigenous personnel. There will be situations of tension between the funding agencies and the spending agencies (R.J. Schreiter, 1990, p.7). Missionaries coming from poor socio-economic background seem to be more easily tempted to misappropriate and mismanage money. There are instances where the people question and challenge such missionaries.

c. Because of the increase of priestly vocations and religious vocations in India, many works which were traditionally carried out by the catechists and lay people are taken up by the priests and religious. This raises the question whether the role of the laity in mission is properly promoted. Many lay people have expressed their disappointment of being marginalized in a clerically dominated Church and mission. If lay involvement in the West has increased in the recent past, it is partly due to the decline in the organized hierarchal power in the Church. In the Protestant Churches, the lay people generally play a significant role because their pastors or clergy are not as organized as in the Catholic Church. As lay people become more educated and grow in their awareness of their legitimate rights and duties in the evangelization work, there will be conflicts and disappointments in this area. The National Convention of the Laity held in Bombay in June 1989 was very articulate along these lines.

d. Fifty percent of the laity, i.e., the women, are marginalized in the Church. Various women movements and organizations play a vital role in the transformation of the milieu in which they live and work. The Indian culture, both secular and religious, is very patriarchal. But

women are changing faster than men and the cultural lag will create problems.

Both the Church of South India and Church of North India have already women ordained to the priestly ministry. Women movements will be among the most powerful movements in the third millennium (J. Tellis-Nayak, 1988, pp. 38-40). Is the Catholic Church reading the signs of the time?

e. The majority of the missionaries in the North Bishops, priests, religious and certain number of lay leaders come from the old churches of the South. In fact, many of the dioceses here are not viable without the collaboration of personnel and resources from outside. Yet both the tribal / adivasi and dalit churches think, feel and speak, not infrequently, against the "Indian foreigners" many of whom have not adequately inculturated themselves into the local culture and do not show genuine love for the people. In this situation the mission of Christ will suffer badly by unredeemed human dynamics.

f. The most crucial issue in evangelization is the theology of mission. According to K. Rahner, we are living in a period ready for a new breakthrough in mission theology. The first breakthrough took place in the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15). After much argument and debate against Peter and the Judeo-Christian tradition, the Church entered into a new consciousness that the message of Jesus must go beyond the Jewish culture and people. The early Church officially became the mission to the gentiles. Rahner goes on to say that during the following centuries, the Christian mission remained predominantly a Greco-Hellenistic (Western) affair, though the Church was potentially universal. The second breakthrough in the missionary consciousness of the Church took place at Vatican II. In the Council and in the post-Council period the Church has become actually universal. The mission theology of the past 25 years is going through the pain of the second breakthrough, partly rejecting the past and proposing a radical mission theology: "It means that the transition from one historical and theological situation into an essentially new one happened only once before in the history of Christianity and is now set to occur for the second time in the transition from the Christianity of Europe (with its American appendages) to an actual world-religion" (K. Rahner, 1981, p. 84). This "passover" from the traditional to a new mission theology and practice cannot take place without the experience of some kind of death. The acceptance of new ideas usually takes many decades.

## Conclusion

If we evaluate the missionary work and its fruit in the Hindi belt by using the parameters of the mission theology of the past, we may not be wrong in concluding that the mission is not a success. The traditional missionary model was characterized by the following priorities:

- a. Statistics of conversions of the non-Christians into the Catholic Church for the salvation of the souls (16th to mid 20th centuries).
- b. Building up various institutions and structures to serve human needs churches, schools, colleges, hospitals, orphanages, etc. (19th and 20th centuries).
- c. Conversion of heart and a new life in the Spirit. In the actual mission work this was not the first priority, though theoretically important.

The experience of the past and the encounter with the contemporary realities stimulated the missionaries to search for an alternative model for the mission of the future. By an alternative model I mean a fresh vision and new thinking about the mission; a new way of doing, organizing and relating as a community; new ways of feeling about mission; and, above all, changed priorities in the realization of various constitutive elements of evangelization. An integrated vision of the mission will naturally result in a new life style. The priorities are:

- a. The proclamation and work for the realization of the Kingdom of God as the highest priority in evangelization. However, detaching the Kingdom of God from Jesus Christ, as some missionaries tend to do, makes it almost impossible to understand the Kingdom that he came to proclaim (Mk 1:14-15). In Jesus the Kingdom itself became present and fulfilled (RM 18). Ours is a country which loves and respects the person of Jesus and his message of love, compassion, forgiveness, detachment and selfless service. Though many people are against sociological conversion, they are never against the person of Jesus and his message. In a person-oriented mission, the proclamation of Jesus, wherever and whenever possible, should be understood as an integral part of the mission of the Church.
- b. The mission is simultaneously the conversion of the heart of the missionary according to the values taught by Jesus. In the past mission generally emphasized the conversion of the object of the mission (people); in the future the stress should be on the conversion of the subject of the mission (the missionaries). Their life style rather than

their words will communicate the Divine. It will be a life of witness. Witness means a life reflecting the attitudes, values and life style of Jesus. The priority is given to quality, not quantity. The future of the mission, in other words, shall not be visualized primarily in terms of numbers.

c. The influence of the mission and the Church in the Hindi belt is far above its numerical strength. The Church does need institutions to make her services effective and efficient. Institutions can be compared to the body through which the vision and the spirit is lived, transmitted and manifested. If these institutions are not pervaded by the spirit of Jesus Christ they become means of power, money and oppression. They are counter-witnesses. In other words, the spiritual influence of men and women behind these institutions is more important than the institutions themselves.

d. The factor of numerical strength is not rejected but it is given a limited meaning and relevance. Even in those areas where the number of conversions was impressive, for instance in Chotanagpur, it is now on the decline. Numerically Christianity will remain a powerless minority in the North of the foreseeable future. Since the majority of the Christians in this area belong to the Dalit, tribal and other economically and politically backward communities, they will have little importance. However it is relevant and important to transform the existing small Christian communities into mature, responsible and witnessing communities.

e. By providing a Christian vision of life, the world, and society the Christian mission will continue to influence the rest of society, as it did in the past. The elements of the alternative model of Christian mission for the future should not be taken in isolation. They should be seen as an integrated concept of the mission with new priorities.

Thus mission in the coming decades will mean:

- A proclamation of Jesus and his Gospel.
- The experience of the conversion of the heart and witness of authentic Christian life in the Spirit.
- An interpretation of the "signs of the times" in the light of the values of the Kingdom and God's all embracing love. Preaching, teaching and promoting these values, in the context of so much personal as well as structural sin, will be an integral part of evangelization.
- The transformation of the world by loving service, with a preferential service to the poor and the powerless. Organized action

to promote human dignity, with an option for the dalits, tribals, women and children, should get high priority. This will demand a life style consistent with a just world order.

- The formation of Christian communities and human communities which worship one God Father/Mother of all humankind. Dialogue with people of different religious traditions and cultures will help to overcome ethnocentrism, to heal historical wounds, to be mutually enriched by one another's religiosity and thus to prepare the ground for universal brotherhood and sisterhood.

- A prophetic critique of and a stand against evil and sin, both personal and structural, which might lead to martyrdom. All these together will lead to "salvation and fullness of life, love and light" as Jesus promised.

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(Continued from p.241)

### Eligibility requirements:

1. M.A. in Christianity; Master's Degree in Christian Theology or Philosophy; Master's Degree in Indian Religions; M.A. in Philosophy, Psychology, Anthropology, Androgy or Sociology.
2. Candidates holding M.A. in Christianity, a Master's Degree in subjects other than Christian Philosophy or Theology, should have an undergraduate degree in Christian Theology or Philosophy (B.Ph. or B.Th.).



## Correspondence

### And the Walls Came Tumbling Down....

Dear Sir,

Strange title for a letter of appreciation of the article "Christian Priesthood in India Today" (Feb 1992) that will have caused both bewilderment and alarm in certain quarters. Fr George Soares-Prabhu's article on the Priesthood might, at first blush, seem as cataclysmic as the dismantling of the Berlin Wall. On a careful reading, however, it will be seen that it offers an understanding of the priesthood which is liberative. His well thought-out and researched article should therefore not be cause for dismay. Rather, as I wish to aver, it gives the beleaguered priest of today, searching for the meaning and relevance of his priesthood, cause to be glad because it provides just that!

In the Catholic Church laypersons are assuming more and more the functions which were presumed to be the prerogative of the 'cultic' priesthood, and hence priests have been questioning the very *raison d'être* of their priesthood. Of what use, they ask, are the long years of training in a seminary, the asceticism of celibacy and ecclesiastical discipline, and the reverence shown to "the beautiful hands of the priest," if the very basis for this mystique of the priesthood is eroded, thereby creating a crisis of identity?

Fr George rightly demolishes the leadership based on cult that has created a "professional" priesthood and has spawned clericalism. He has highlighted, rather, the real leadership of service based on the priesthood of the non-clerical Jesus who came to establish the reign of God through self offering in sacrifice. It is no mean task that the priest is "officially charged with the ministry of building the Christian (and human) community by making the saving work of Jesus effectively present through word, sign and style of life." Rather, I dare say, this charge calls for a higher degree of dedication, of wisdom and learning, and of spirituality, than that which a mere cultic leadership evokes. One need only compare what one is habituated to expect from a country parish priest with what is expected from a modern missionary priest in rural or tribal areas, worldwide.

Seen in this context, the priest as builder of the community becomes, in Bonhoeffer's fine phrase, 'the man for others'. In his role as prophet, teacher and servant of the community the priest is challenged to be a man of prayer, of learning and of compassion. In a sense, such a priest is called to exercise a more exalted and exacting form of leadership than the "cultic priest." That we, present-day priests in India, have gone into "odd avocations" and are at odds to establish what constitutes our priestly spirituality, only proves the point. Such a priest leader, too, will need to ruthlessly weed out mediocrity, self-seeking and self-indulgence, in the mould of St Paul's athlete in a race.

If anything, Fr George's article challenges us to be better men, cast in the heroic mould of the prophet-teacher-servant Jesus, the Christ, who is Priest forever!

St Anthony's Church,  
Vakola, Bombay-400 055

Fr Denis G PEREIRA

# Book Reviews

## Missions

***Trends in Mission: Towards the Third Millennium.*** Edited by William JENKINSON, CSSP and Helen O'SULLIVAN, MM. Maryknoll: N.Y., Orbis Books, 1991. Pp. xx-419. \$ 26.95 pb. ISBN 0-88344-766-5.

This volume brings together a selection of conferences delivered at the annual seminars and other significant meetings of SEDOS, a study and documentation centre at the service of mission societies. The seminars had followed a methodology of creative reflection based on an experiential approach. This is reflected in the choice of papers aimed at a balance between reflective and experiential contributions. They seek to cover the areas: the purpose of mission, the context of mission, models of mission, people in mission and the challenge of mission.

Part One on the Context of Mission Today begins with a fine contribution by Felix Wilfred on emerging trends that challenge the churches of Asia. Michael Amaladoss presents questions from local churches in Asia. There are also contributions from the United States, Africa and Latin America. The popular religiosity in different countries is evaluated and the impact of modernity and urbanization is discussed. The contribution on the pastoral problems looming in the mega-cities of the future with their vast proletariat is particularly illuminating.

Part Two deals with the models of mission and ministry. It emerges that the complexity of the challenges facing the Church calls for a variegated ministry. Justice and ecological issues receive due attention. The need for new modes of doing theology and evolving new forms of spirituality appears clearly. Reflections by the participants, though presented briefly, enrich the treatment. There is also an important contribution on the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Af-

firmation by Emilio Castro and a Catholic Response by Bishop Basil Meeking.

Part Three concerns the role of the laity and religious in mission. There is no special section on the clergy perhaps because their role receives sufficient attention elsewhere! The identity of the laity is discussed in the context of transcending the Church/world dichotomy. The story of a couple is presented in an illuminating manner. The piece on the lay woman's mission in Latin America has lessons for all as it returns to the primitive Church. In another contribution by a male and female religious, women and men are presented as partners in mission. There are useful hints regarding formation of religious for mission today.

Part Four has a single essay on the Challenges of Mission Today by Michael Amaladoss. He does well in tracing contemporary developments in the theology of mission. Religious dialogue and justice issues receive special attention.

While welcoming this large volume with a rich fare of insights and with a cross-cultural perspective, we may make a few critical remarks. If mission is ultimately proclamation of Christ for the life of the world, it is rather strange that Christ is the great absent in most of the discussions. The results of the 1981 seminar in the form of an agenda for the future are given. But there are no statements or conclusions from subsequent seminars. Although the work is supposed to present "trends in mission," it would have been good to have an overall synthesis. Regarding challenges, the serious problems of racism and neo-colonialism could have received some attention. Apart from these shortcomings, the work could be a useful source book and deserves to find a place in all theological, pastoral and formation libraries.

George V. LOBO, S.J.

**The Missionary and the Diviner.** *Contending theologies of Christian and African Religions.* By Michael C. KIRWEN. Maryknoll, N.Y., Orbis Books, 1987. Pp. xxv-134. \$ 9.95/19.95.

I am glad to be able to look at this, despite its rather deceptive title which seems to indicate that it is a novel about a meeting, or perhaps a confrontation, between a missionary and diviner. In fact it is a serious study of pre-Christian African theologies and cosmologies something which most non-Africans did not believe existed, or if it existed they did not think it was worth looking at.

Fr Kirwen has the refreshing openness of a real missionary. He is willing to learn as well as to teach and has no inbuilt prejudices about non-African superiority. He does his learning through dialogues with Riana, the diviner. His immediate conclusion is that traditional African religion and Christianity can work together to fulfil each other and thereby provide a genuine African incarnational theology, which, despite the hopes raised by the Second Vatican Council, still seems to be frowned on by the Vatican.

For the African there is one God who is creator, transcendent yet immanent, spirit and breath. There is no dichotomy between the secular and sacred. The world itself is sacred. These are the basics. The sun and moon are helpers as it were, superior creations of God. Ancestors are 'reborn' in their descendents who are named after them. God's withdrawal from the world was due to an accident, not a moral confrontation or human sin. Evil, even cosmic evil storms, earthquakes, famine, etc., are always caused by immoral actions, personal or social. There is no future world of redress. That is done here and now through the ancestors. So Baptism for a thinking African meant a re-birth for a Christian ancestor, after whom the catechumen was named. The Father in heaven was, of course, Kiteme, the creator God. The result was that traditional and Christian religious values

continue to exist side by side in the minds and hearts of new Christians.

Fr Kirwen believes that there should be a healthy critical interrelationship, rather than an attempt by one to submerge the other, which, as he shows, does not work. He addresses the problems from a theological, cultural and linguistic perspective. For this, his honest dialogues with a diviner were necessary. "Diviners," he says "are the moral analysts, the charismatic leaders, the functionary priests of the traditional religions. Diviners know the African traditions regarding God, the ancestral spirits, the world and life after death. In fact their very authority as religious leaders derives from traumatic, supernatural encounters with the spirit world that has turned them into mediums of the ancestral spirits. Diviners stand as salvific mediators between the living and the dead. And, since they are present to both realities, they are able to make known the desires, requests and demands of the ancestral spirits."

Riana, his diviner friend, is knowledgeable of and respectful to Christianity. Yet he can talk with dignity and self-confidence of the beliefs of his tribe. "My father once said that there is no need to pray out loud like the Christians with many words and singing. It is sufficient just to sit quietly and acknowledge with awe the ever present blessings of Kiteme: family, crops and cattle." God loves by God's own power; God is everywhere; God is good; God is not a human being; God is different from all creation; God is God.

Riana gets the missionary tied in knots when he says it is not we who have many gods but you, with your three gods. And, of course, he cannot understand Jesus being both God and man it is like someone being both man and woman at the same!

The dialogue proceeds, always respectfully and gently on each side on God, on the absence of a messiah, the problem of evil care, for widows, religious morality, life after death, remem-

brance or resurrection. For me this book was a revelation. It must be invaluable for any missionary working in Africa.

R.H. LESSER

*Sharing Your Faith. A Nav Sadhana Handbook. Teera Noor AD 2000 (second edition, revised and enlarged). Varanasi: Nav Sadhana, 1990. Pp. vi-102. Rs 15.*

This book is the fruit of seminars on *Direct Evangelisation* (1986-87) and *Sharing Your Faith*, and Evangelisation retreats, and it has been deeply influenced by the vision and ideas of Fr Jim Borst, as far as I can judge. The focus is upon explicit evangelisation through direct proclamation and person to person evangelisation. The content is restricted to the core message of God as Father and Jesus Christ as Lord, Son of God and Saviour of all. The purpose is to awaken and nourish the personal faith of the evangeliser, lay, priest or religious, and to provide strategies for evangelisation in North India among men and women of other religions, including tribal religions.

The book is a Handbook and can be used for seminars, retreats or private reading. It is divided into five progressive sections: a. The Heart of Evangelisation; b. Proclamation of God the Father and Jesus the Son; c. Reaching out to People; d. Doing the Work of an Evangelist; and e. Further Resources for Evangelisation in terms of more content and more reflections on method.

The book reflects clear conviction, theological certainty and clarity of purpose and method. There is no questioning. The sources of its thought are the Scripture (with a presumption that normal Christians can understand the text), Vatican II, recent Papal teaching and material from conversion stories and experiences in evangelisation. Theologians have no role, and no problems exist in the interpretation of sources. Traditional Catholic teaching is a source which could be correctly called "popular." Evangelical Protestant traditions have also an influence.

The book has definite strengths and its major value in my mind is the emphasis given in many places to active personal faith, bhakti traditions, the centrality of God the Father and the insistence on the full significance of Jesus Christ and the awareness that the Gospel is to be proclaimed.

The simple way of explaining our faith, the complexity of human life and religious traditions in India and the process of evangelisation is, in my judgement, its weakness. I find some chapters poor: ch. 20 on Life after Death and God's universal saving will; ch. 23, *Sharing Your Faith with Different Communities*, which is too simple.

The problems, both theological and cultural, related to direct evangelisation, the structured nature of evil and salvation, the expression of active personal faith in the lives of the martyrs for justice, freedom and human dignity, God's self-revelation within other religious traditions and their role in salvation... are omitted or inadequately handled. The result is that direct evangelisation is impoverished, in my judgement. However there is much which could help to remove the malaise and reluctance to share the riches of God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ with other believers.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

## Justice

*Integral Justice. Changing People Changing Structures.* By John J. WALSH, M.M. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1990. Pp.viii-112, \$9.95. ISBN 0-88344-717-7 (pbk).

Himself an experienced teacher and missionary, John Walsh addresses pastoral ministers of schools and parishes, and helps them understand the faith of their people, and the challenge of their mission. Justice and peace concerns have received much attention of the Church in the past. In recent times Pope John Paul II has stressed these two

key notions. Nevertheless, despite a profusion of books, resources, and study materials, those involved in active crusade for justice and peace remain more or less the same. Reflecting on this phenomenon the author remarks: "Something is missing" (p 2). John Walsh gives guidance to pastoral ministers to reach out to the "cultural Christians" and motivate them to create programmes of justice that are vital and integral to them as Christians. Hence the title of the book: *Integral Justice*.

Divided into eight short chapters, the author elaborates the themes Barriers to Integral Justice, Levels of Faith Appropriation, The Christian Discovery Process, Rediscovering the Primary Role of Scripture, The New Spirituality, Church as Easter-Pentecost Process, The Eucharist (the great coming together), and Understanding the "Structures of Sin."

As Christian commitment grows, people need a new spirituality, a social spirituality, to sustain them in their journey into faith and justice. This widening of spirituality should help them see the systemic evil of today. The author makes a fine point when he says that "people have developed a time nose for uncovering personal sin over the centuries, but recognizing systemic sin and admitting that one lives within an internally flawed system is a big step to take" (pp. 8-9). So the crucial question that the author asks is: "How do we help a Church evolve so that it is committed to justice as well as political, economic and social justice?"

There are a few novel elements which I liked particularly. The exploration of the notion of "Religious Justice" in Ch.6 is worth mentioning. Particularly I liked his analysis of "Structures of Sin" in Ch.8. The notion of "structures changing people" is something that I have often grappled with. Walsh has touched upon this topic though it needs further reflective analysis.

An index could have made the

book all the more attractive to the readers. But the book is valuable.

John CHATHANATT, S.J.

**Female Children in Fishing Occupation.**  
By Dr Swapan SINHA, Delhi: ISPCK, 1991. Pp. 41. Rs.15. ISBN 81-7214-021-5.

This serious study of an aspect of child labour belongs to the *Joint Women's Programme* series of booklets. The author studies the situation of female child labour in the remote areas of the Sunderbans where young girls are forced to work in the rivers to catch prawn seeds and expose themselves to the danger of being bitten or eaten by sharks. The discrimination is found in family and society and affects the whole life of young girls. The author describes the methods used, gives statistical tables under chosen areas of investigation and makes suggestions to alleviate and change the situation.

**Our Daily Rice** Edited by T. DAY-ANANDAN FRANCIS. Madras: CLS, 1992. Pp.79. Rs 30. \$ 3.

The subtitle of this small book describes its context and value: "Asian Poems on Freedom and Justice." The Editor has gathered Christian poems and hymns from most Asian countries which deal with areas of human life from the perspectives of human dignity, suffering and rights and which describe various types of lives and conditions of life in Asia. The themes of justice and suffering recur again and again. A useful collection.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

## Literature

**Universality of Tagore.** Souvenir of a Symposium on Rabindranath Tagore. Edited and Introduced by Fr Luciano COLUSSI, SDB. Calcutta: Nitika/Don Bosco and Firma KLM, 1991. Pp. xii-184. Rs 200. \$ 40.

This book is the fruit of a symposium organized by Nikita in 1987 coinciding with Tagore's 125th birth anniversary.

The body of the book (pp. 17-139) contains the papers and responses to them covering most aspects of the life and achievements of Tagore by eminent speakers from Bengal. Tagore poet, dramatist, novelist, philosopher, social reformer, musician and artist is brought alive to the reader. That the reader be able to situate him within his own world, attention is also given to his contemporaries and to his life. The long appendix could easily have been omitted as it moves the focus from Tagore.

**The Concept of Self-Surrender in the Poetry of Newman and Hopkins.** By Dr Mary Antony CHEMMAMADIYIL, O.S.U. Ranchi: Ursulines of Ranchi [Ursuline Convent, 843001] 1990. Pp.vi-152. Rs 95.

That a thesis so obviously Christian has been written, accepted and praised in Ranchi University, is a challenge to others. Though the bulk of the study centres on Newman and Hopkins, their lives, "style" and poetry and the key aspect of every believer's life, self-surrender, the study also introduces the readers to the Bible, its character as literature and the depth of its thought and influence on Western culture. The reader also learns about poetic style, the world in which Newman and Hopkins lived and Catholic revival at the end of the 19th century. Salvaging what was valuable in Romanticism and Rationalism, a group of poets insisted on the spiritual dimensions of human life. Sr Mary Antony introduces the reader to Hawker de Vere, Patmore, Meynell, Thompson, Johnson, Wilde and Dowson. This book will be of value to students of English literature and to those seeking to discover the religious depths of poetry, especially in Newman and Hopkins.

**Rabindranath Tagore and Germany: A Documentation.** By Martin KAMPCHEN. Calcutta, Max Mueller Bhavan Goethe Institut, 1991. Pp. viii-161. Rs.100 (for India). Distributed by Rupa & Co. ISBN 81-85304-45-9.

Tagore scholars will be happy to have this documentation of the way the

German-speaking world reacted to the poetry and personality of Tagore from the time he received the Nobel prize in 1913 to today, specially during the visits of the Poet to Germany in the twenties. The documentation has been carefully collected from many sources and translated into English by a keen German scholar at Shantiniketan who had already published a long article on "Rabindranath Tagore and Germany" in *Indian Literature* (New Delhi, Sahitya Akademi May-June 1990, 109-140).

The material is presented in four main chapters: the Nobel Prize celebrations; the German "writers" on Rabindranath (Brecht, Rilke, Mann, Hesse, Zweig, Kafka, Wolff and Klabund); the German "scholars" (among others, Einstein, Otto, Winternitz, Buber, Stella Kramrisch) and Rabindranath in post-war Germany. An initial essay by Alex Aronson, an exhaustive bibliography running into 336 items and indices complete the volume.

One will note that the frank criticisms of Tagore by some "writers" — specially Mann and Hesse — are as objectively recorded as the appreciations, coming specially from the "scholars." The book also reproduces a number of contemporary relevant photographs of Tagore with various personalities and five cartoons, the most charming of which is reproduced on the jacket at the back portraying the then sixty-year old poet apprehensively ice-skating with the popular thirty-year old film actress Henny Porters, eyes and hands of the couple interlocked, beard and robes of the poet flowing gracefully into the air.

G. GISPert-SAUCH, S.J.

## Tribals

**The Korkus of The Vindhya Hills.** By Stephen FUCHS. New Delhi: Inter-India Publications [D/17, Raja Garden Extn, 110015], 1988. Pp.443. Rs 315. ISBN 81-210-0203-6.

This book would be of special interest to Mundas and students of Tribal culture and religion in the Jharkhand areas of

WB, Bihar, Orissa and MP. The Korkus of MP are historically and culturally related to the main Munda group of Chotanagpur. Stephen Fuchs, a renowned anthropologist, has written this monograph which is "exhaustive and comprehensive" from some years of living with and observations of the whole cycle of life of this group. The study itself and methods used could be instructive for others undertaking study of various tribal groups in northern India.

**The Oraon Habitat. A Study in Cultural Geography.** By Sr Alomani Anupa Kujur, D.S.A (Ph.D.) Ranchi: Daughters of St Anne (Available from Satya Bharati, P.O. 2 834001), 1989. Pp. vii-263 with Appendix pp.11. Rs 200.

This is a study of the places where the Oraons live in Chotanagpur and also and more importantly a detailed description of Oraon culture. The amount of information gathered in the study and in the selected bibliography and appendix is a gift to the Oraon community and to social scientists and administrators. Though some of the statistics and information is now dated, yet the work will be useful for Christians seeking to create tribal expressions of their Christian faith. As habitat and culture are interrelated so also culture and the articulation of faith must meet and deeply influence each other.

**Through Aboriginal Eyes. The Cry from the Wilderness.** By Anne PATTIL-GRAY. Geneva, WCC, 1991. Pp. xix-159. \$ 11.90. ISBN 2-8254-0999-5.

The author is executive secretary of the Aboriginal and Islander Commission of the Australian Council of Churches. When Australia "celebrated" its bicentenary some years ago the horrible plight of the Aborigines and the history of the white people's entrance into and settlement in the land became part of international awareness as never before. This awareness included the ravages experienced by these people, their present struggles for land rights, for respect, recognition, political rights and for reparation by the white community and an

awareness of the richness of their cultural and religious heritage.

The Seventh World Assembly will also be remembered because of the presence of the Aboriginal community, their protests, their influence on the liturgy, their presence in arts, dance and symbols and references to them in reports, messages and in two statements regarding WCC Action on Aboriginal Concerns and the Statement on Indigenous Peoples and Land Rights "Move beyond Words."

This book will enable the reader to be informed about the Aboriginal peoples of Australia, their history, culture, spirituality, their plight, the racial discrimination they suffer in so many ways and their fight for Land Rights. The book also has a lot of statistical information and bibliographic material. Its major contribution is that the struggles of this people are articulated passionately by not only one Aboriginal but by many whose stories the author uses. In the book a Christian calls the Christian churches to account.

Paddy MEAGHER

## People

**Who Are You, Ignatius of Loyola?** By Jean-Claude DHOTEL, S.J. Anand: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1991. Pp. ix 118. Rs 26, \$ 4.

This is an attractive life of Ignatius with a difference. In many ways Ignatius speaks for himself and of himself. The life story is told in the form of a biography of a selected series of events. These events of his life form a commentary upon the Spiritual Exercises and both throw light on the scant auto-biographical writings of this great man. The chapters are short. Particular days in his life are chosen as anchor points and a text of the Exercises introduces the narrative of the events of the periods. We have a life, a commentary on the Exercises and a history of the origin of the Society of Jesus and her Constitutions. Though there need not be a factual link between the aspects of the teaching and guidance to be found in the Exercises and the events

chosen, yet the experience of Ignatius was in more ways than one the mother of the Exercises. I would give this short study to anyone keen to know and be affected by this outstanding Christian leader and teacher. An excellent book for men and women following Ignatian retreats to read throughout the day.

**Men of God: Men for Others.** The Jesuits, an obedient avant-garde confronting the challenges of the modern world. Peter H. KOLVENBACH interviewed by Renzo GIACOMELLI. Bombay: St. Paul Publications, 1990. Pp. 165. Rs 38. ISBN 81-7109-119-9.

Looking at the table of contents the reader becomes aware how the interview with Fr Kolvenbach, the Jesuit Superior General, ranged over so many areas, including those areas where potential or actual controversy and problems would be obvious, e.g., The Pope and the Jesuits, Poor Apostles and Promoters of Justice, Teachers of Liberation, The Challenges of the Modern World.

The answers of the General are honest and simple, balancing the contrasts, weaknesses and strengths, successes and failures, hopes and disappointments. He is discreet and loyal to the truth, to the Society and to the Church, aware of her human character. Reading some parts you are aware that more could be said which cannot be said in an Interview which becomes public property.

Readers will be introduced to an insightful description of Ignatius' spiritual experiences and vision as these have been articulated in the Society of Jesus. We see him clearly as the man who responded with such great freedom, wholeness and realism to God revealed in Christ within the Church and in the world of his time.

His sensitivity to the world, his loyalty to the Church as well as his apostolic creativity are part of the heritage of the Jesuits. These very gifts account for both the creativity of the Society and the tensions and conflicts within and without which mark her history past or pres-

ent.

Fr Kolvenbach has not allowed himself in the Interview (nor in his guidance of the Society in her ministries) to be caught up in the discussions, tensions and controversies of the postconciliar period and the more recent past. He responds with direct frankness to questions about the Society and the Magisterium, the Curia, the fourth vow, the problems related to the commitment to justice, moral theology... However he develops in a positive fashion the Society's present ministry within the Church, responsive to some of the many challenges from the world and looks ahead to the future with realistic hope in areas of mission, ecumenism, interreligious dialogue, eastern Europe, ecology, justice, inculturation.

The reader comes away with a deeper grasp of Jesuit formation and ministry, a sense of hope and an awareness of the quiet confidence of Fr Kolvenbach. We are called to grow in that faith which must seek to become a realist expression of love within our broken world.

**Paddy MEAGHER**

**Jesuit Profiles. Some Eminent Jesuits of South Asia.** Edited by V. Lawrence SUN-DARAM, S.J., Anand: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1991. Pp. 419. Rs 120, \$ 12.

Collected in this Ignatian Year commemorative volume are forty-five biographical sketches of Jesuits from India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. The lives of these men span over a hundred years from 1837 to the 1980s. Their apostolic involvement is as diverse as Jesuit apostolic ministry can be and so the reader is enabled to see the types of ministry and the various theologies which characterized Jesuit involvement in the subcontinent in the last hundred years.

There are great men, eccentric great men, heroic great men, difficult great men, simple great men included in the selection. The sketches which I have read are realistic, very interesting and at times deeply moving. The Jesuit reader would grow in awareness of the Assis-



tancy. Names he would have heard in passing come alive, men he never knew about are born for him, he sees the great diversity of personalities, ministries, spiritualities and apostolic attitudes and glimpses more of Jesuit history. There is a fine selection, including priests and brothers, foreign and Indian, men from every Jesuit administrative area (Provinces/Regions). Jesuit readers will note gaps and wonder about the selection of some from their Provinces and the absence of others.

The non-Jesuit reader will find here some insights into the Jesuit way of life, aspects of the history of the South Asian Church during the last hundred years, sketches of the lives of men whose names they could have heard or read about and the witness of the diversity of charisms in the Church and insights into the way God and his Spirit work and mould men in ministry and the Christian and religious life. I think many Jesuits could put this book beside their bed to read before falling asleep and would sleep in peace with gratitude and deeper personal trust in their Lord.

**Banishing God in Albania.** The Prison Memoirs of Giacomo GARDIN, S.J. San Francisco: Ignatius Press. 1988. Pp.165. \$ 7.95. ISBN 0-89870-220-8.

Albania has been in the news these days because of its economic collapse with the end of Communism and the refugees attempting to enter Italy. This short book which did not foresee what would happen in a few years, documents the destruction of the Church in Albania in the years 1945-55, especially 1945-50 and witnesses to the unbelievable suffering, degradation and murder of so many good men and women and therefore to the frightening cruelty and fanaticism of others. This is the story of the cowardice of many and the humble heroism of others. We need to listen today to such personal stories to remind ourselves of our human frailty and the danger of ideology and fanaticism. Gardin comes across as a very human person, honest and simple, who has matured in suffering and can finally thank

God for this school of suffering in which he learnt more of life and faith than in all his formation in religious life. The homily he preached in Albanian at the age of 80 in San Francisco in 1985 when the Albanian community observed the fortieth anniversary of 1945 reflects the humility of this man of God and the fact that his story is just a paragraph in the story of such human suffering of so many.

**Madeleine Barot.** By André JACQUES. Geneva: WCC, 1991. Pp. viii-88. \$ 8.95. ISBN 2-8254-0994-2.

This book is the fruit of a series of interviews with a woman who has played a major role in the Ecumenical Movement for over fifty years. She was born in France in 1909 in a religious and active Protestant family. In her years at school and at the University she was actively involved in Christian student movements and activities. The war brought her back from Rome where she was Librarian and Archivist at the French School. With other deeply dedicated Christians she became involved in CIMADE (Inter-Movement Committee for Evacuees) and was appointed its General Secretary. This group was dedicated to work for the most unfortunate whom they identified as the evacuees, among whom were thousands and thousands of Jews, many of whom were finally to be sent to the death chambers. To comfort, care for, organize escapes into neutral countries . . . they organised support resistance movements. She was a great organizer, planner and thinker. After the War she worked for reconciliation within and with Germany and resettlement of refugees. Then she entered into official positions in the WCC, the departments which dealt with youth, women, and socio-economic development. Finally she returned to France, still immersed in CIMADE with which she had kept her links and involved herself in other movements for human rights.

The short book gives us glimpses of Christian involvement and thinking over a period of fifty years. In this woman we

see faith that does justice, contextual theology and a spirituality of deep and persevering involvement. A fine Christian woman.

**Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.**

**Still Learning A Personal Story.** By Ken GNANAKAN, Bangalore: Acts Trust (P.O. Box 3408, 560034) 1991. Pp.162 Rs 30.

The title expresses in a satisfactory manner the tenor of this autobiography. The writer continues to learn on the journey of life. He is the Director of an evangelical organization based in Bangalore called Acts Ministries (Agriculture, Craft, Trades, Studies). He is married with two children.

The book traces the story of his life, his gradual conversion to Christ from a popular and able hotel and night club musician to a devout Christian evangelist who worked in the Youth for Christ movement and gradually took a leading role before he began an extended period of biblical and theological studies in Australia and England. In the light of a religious experience his vision took concrete shape in Acts, in a progressive search for a more Indian face for Christian life and witness and an independent existence for Acts related to the organization *International Needs*.

Throughout his life, music, witness and evangelical preaching have remained integral ingredients of his Christian ministry. He has obvious gifts of leadership and writes with an appealing honesty about his own faith pilgrimage.

**Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.**

## Spirituality

**Encounter Not Performance. On Prayer.** By Frank WALLACE, S.J. Newtown: E.J. Dwyer (available from Examiner Bookshop, Bombay), 1991. Pp. x-198. AS 16.95. ISBN 0-85574-300-X.

The title underlines the specific and continued emphasis upon various aspects of the interpersonal nature of prayer. This is a book first and foremost

to be "used" and not to be read. It is personal, simple, genuine, non-academic yet with depth. Many of the influences upon modern human life and spirituality are in evidence: Image of God, self-image, the importance of the interpersonal, of feelings, of sharing, group, charismatic and healing prayer, and the prayer of married couples. This is not a book for those who wish to study prayer but for those, be they beginners or others, religious or lay, who wish to be reminded of many aspects of prayer, to reflect upon their prayer, to be exposed to and experience new dimensions in prayer, or simplify their prayer.

The book is divided into two parts. The first explores what prayer is. There are twelve short chapters (pp. 3-98). The second exposes the reader to some great spiritual writers and their prayer life. The final person is Mary. Twelve persons are chosen as examples (pp.99-198). Each of these 24 chapters is quite brief. In both sections there are questions and/or prayer exercises to enable the reader to personalize the content. Obviously the author wants the book to be used in groups where sharing and discussion will continue the process of formation effected by the book itself. Further readings are suggested for each chapter. The detailed Table of Contents makes an index unnecessary.

Throughout, Frank Wallace writes from his personal experience as a Jesuit educator who moved into specific pastoral ministry in marriage encounter, and as a spiritual director, tertian instructor and involved in charismatic and healing prayer groups. His own and the experience of others and the influence of Tony de Mello, Jim Gill and others, as well as the writings and life of great Christian figures have been his teachers.

The deeply personal nature of the book adds a special dimension. There is the advantage that the sharing of personal experience and clearly writing from such experience does evoke and lead readers to their own experience and its articulation. There is also a danger, since the writer belongs to one type of

person of the nine in the Enneagram terminology: some other types will resonate and some will find the approach, emphases and style quite foreign. So I can see some readers being disappointed and others both helped and enthusiastic. I was helped.

**Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.**

*The Prayer of the Frog. A Book of Story Meditations* (2nd Volume). Call to Love. Meditations. By Anthony DE MELLO, S.J. Anand: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1989/1991. Pp. xxii-256/vii-97. Rs. 38/20.

*The Prayer of the Frog* continues the series of Tony de Mello's wisdom teaching by means of stories which come from the collection of stories created by men and women of various cultures, religious traditions and races. As the author says, he has inherited the cotton and thread from varied sources and like a weaver and dyer has woven them into a pattern and given them fascinating colours. The stories are collected under the following headings: education, authority, spirituality, human nature, relationships, service and enlightenment. Often at the end of a story there is a pithy comment highlighting the message.

The danger is that one may only be entertained by these stories because they are so fascinating. The challenge is to allow them to work like a little leaven or a friendly virus and so guide us to greater authenticity and more profound wisdom. The book will continue to have the effect which Parmananda describes when he speaks of the influence Tony de Mello had during his life: "What attracted so many to his person and ideas was precisely that he challenged everyone to question, to explore, to get out of prefabricated patterns of thought and behaviour, away from stereotypes, and to dare be one's true self, in fine, to seek an ever greater authenticity" (Foreword, p.xviii).

*Call to Love* is of a different nature.

The aim is the same, namely to guide others in a vigorous way to greater inner freedom and wholeness by means of insight and awareness. The great obstacle to wholeness is the web of attachments, value judgements, ignorance and passions and the assertion of the self.

Stories are not used here but comments and reflections on human experience and nature from a wisdom perspective. Here we listen to the teacher and not the storyteller. The listener/reader is guided in a process of self-reflection. Though there are thirty-one meditations, the content is repetitive. We are made aware of the "sinfulness" and the psychological sickness of society and their profound influence on the thought and behaviour of every person. Freedom and wholeness are found by human effort and there does not seem to be an obvious place for God's Spirit and merciful love. The biblical texts at the opening of each meditation are normally external to the reflections.

The author is obviously a perceptive observer of human behaviour and of the inner tensions, sickness, ignorance and the violence we do to our nature. Buddhist approaches to awareness and wholeness are clear in the meditations. Tony de Mello, as Parmananda says in *The Prayer of the Frog*, "was most ready to make friends, to share; yet one felt there was a dimension in him that was out of reach" (p.xviii). What strikes me in all his writings is that he himself remains to a great extent unknown, and I do not think that we can judge from the wisdom writings about his own inner personal life and call him a mystic. Reading these meditations and stories many will be deeply helped, others shaken, some puzzled and others indifferent or critical. We are fortunate to have so much of Tony's wisdom heritage available for those who never heard him.

**Paddy MEAGHER**

# *Vidyajyoti*

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### **A Way to World Peace — As an Indian Sees it.**

VANDANA Mataji

The conflict in Ayodhya has been the source of much national anxiety. Meditating on the problem the founder of the Jeevandhara Ashram (Jaiharikhal, Garhwal Dt., U.P. 246139) discovers that peace is the responsibility of every human being, and that world peace can come about only if there is peace among religions, and that meditation is a powerful means to bring about such peace. While pleading for relations of friendship among religions she describes the initiative of a group of believers who went recently to Ayodhya just to meditate on and long for peace.

**I** have been reflecting on three convictions that have steadily grown in me over the last three years. And three facts have reinforced them and prompt me to share them, hoping that the Word will inspire someone reading these words to try out the method of bringing to our war-weary world the peace it so longs for, and needs if our planet earth and all on it must be rescued from an inglorious end.

The three inspiring facts are a recent article in the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's *Journal* on a Special Convocation at Delhi held for Mother Teresa and Justice Hidayatullah on their becoming the Bhavan's Honorary Members (Vol.38, no.9 December 15, 1991); another article by Donald Nicholl on "Saints for Peace" in the English weekly *The Tablet* of January 4th, 1992. The third was an 'event', spread over two and a half years, a *shanti yatra* (peace pilgrimage) to

Ayodhya, with an inter-faith group going to meditate there.

The three convictions that have been strengthened are:

- (i) World peace necessitates a *serious effort from every human being*;
- (ii) World peace cannot come unless there is first *peace between religions* that is, a true friendship;
- (iii) A powerful but neglected weapon for peace is *meditation*.

(i) *World peace depends on the sincerity of purpose of every individual*, especially of believers in the Goodness hidden in the heart of every creature: *hridi sarvasya 'dhishtitam*, "I am seated in the heart of all," says Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita. The growing appreciation in India of our Prime Minister Shri P.V. Narasinha Rao further convinces us that acting out of personal and solid convictions based on ethical and spiritual values and trusting in the good will of others, even of opposition political parties, lead us to sympathetic and understanding relationships, which bring hope to our desperate world. Reverence for differing opinions and respect for those who hold them is specially significant and essential with regard to religious persuasions.

(ii) *Peace between religions*, as Hans Kung holds, is the first essential peace we should work for if this world has to know peace in all other areas of life. Respect for the faith of others does not mean merely letting them have their own way of reaching God. Our usual interfaith dialogue has many miles to go. Dialogue means a true caring and cherishing of the people belonging to different faiths, and a sincere seeking to understand and appreciate whatever is good, true and beautiful in their religions. This requires not only seeking Truth but also having Love. Mahatma Gandhi said: "Realisation of Truth (which for him was another name for God) is not possible without *ahimsa*." We need an active, creative, consistent non-violence in our hearts to enter truly into the others' faith-convictions — as friends enter each other's home and hearts. I must learn not only the "theology" of religions, but, more importantly, the "spirituality" of the other's faith. Only then can we truly "respect other religions as we respect our own" (Gandhiji). This will lead us to see that true happiness comes from *within*. And thus we shall learn to enter into a real deep dialogue in the 'cave of the heart', as Swami Abhishiktananda taught. It will also prepare us for the next century and millennium when *spirituality* more than *religion*, *silence within* more than *worship without*, will be the form adopted in religious life of prayer. Already thousands in the West

have given up church-going but spend hours in serious meditation: this may well be the normal way in the future.

Moreover, not only have Westerners been coming to India to learn Yogi and Buddhist ways of entering within, but in Europe, America and Australia many have begun to adopt a lifestyle of open communities where they opt to live with Hindus and Buddhists and people of different faiths. Are we in India slow to read the signs of the times? In fact, some of our Indian youth have also already begun to give up church-going and 'religious' behaviour in their attitudes and ways of acting. This is where our 'friendship,' not just 'tolerance,' can come in and help — friendship as the Lord Jesus understood it, loving the traitor disciple unto the end, teaching us to love our enemies, to be ready to lay down our lives for anyone — irrespective of what religion she or he follows!

The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan has begun to give us an example of an open attitude to all religions. Its *Sarva Dharma Maitri Pratishthan* is a movement to promote friendship between religions, a marvelous venture they have undertaken two years ago. The Bhavan being an open-minded, apolitical movement with international goals and vision, cuts across all barriers of caste, creed, culture, language, race, nation. It is "catholic" in the true sense of the word — "universal."

The project is conceived as a national endeavour of all like-minded institutions and individuals wedded to inter-religious harmony. Several leaders and institutions have committed themselves to co-operate actively in this hope-filled project. This means more than periodic meetings of dialogue, or occasional processions. It is a commitment, if I understand it aright. They have planned to work systematically from the bottom upwards through (a) ten graded textbooks for the age group 5-15, highlighting the essential unity of all religions and their ethical, spiritual and cultural values; and (b) a bimonthly video magazine and regular nation-wide lectures, seminars, symposia and publications.

Perhaps some Christians may fear a danger of "syncretism" and possible "infidelity" to their own faith (cf. Cardinal Ratzinger's warning to all the bishops in his letter about Eastern forms of "meditation" practiced by so many Christians). But if we have the truth, what have we to fear? If we believe that God is our protector — the protector of truth — whom need we fear? "Fearlessness" — a word, which Swami Vivekananda said bursts like a bomb in the Upanishads — is constantly addressed to us by God in various ways:

"Fear not: it is I." And again "It is love that casts out fear."

A *genuine ahimsic (non-violent) revolution* would begin if we all entered this project wholeheartedly. It would mean a 'friendship' that would truly open us up to all things noble — no matter what their origin. The oldest Scripture of the world, the Rigveda, tells us, *áno bhadráh kratavo yantu visvatah* — "Let noble thoughts come to us from everywhere." This openness to all things noble is India's title of pride and it should enable us to show our friendship in practical ways. While the priest and levite, too preoccupied with preserving their own precious truths and laws, passed by the wounded man lying on the road, it was a Samaritan, despised by the Jews, who let his goodness shine forth by doing something concrete for the poor man. He did not ask his name, caste or religion. He just loved him. Is this what we do? Alas! not always.

I was struck by how the Christian community is mobilised quickly into action by our religious leaders when religious women are raped, or when any of our Christian "rights" are violated. If a church were involved in the Ayodhya issue, instead of a temple and a mosque, would the Christian reaction be just to pray and fast a little, as we were asked to do by the Catholic Bishops of India?

Jesus seems to be fond of showing us that the despised-by-Jews Samaritans are preferred. It was to a Samaritan woman that he revealed the inner life of the Spirit by the example of "living waters" (Jn 4), and in another place he explicitly says in lyrical, mystical, yet clear, language that this "living water" which would flow from the heart of *anyone* thirsty— who came to him and drank — is the Spirit of God: "this he said, of the Spirit" (Jn 7:29).

In a painting by Jyoti Sahi done for our Ashram Jesus' 'friendship' is very beautifully portrayed in the Samaritan woman drawing the water — after she had been awakened to the true waters of life — not from the well but from the 'cave' of Jesus' heart. And on either side of Jesus seated on a rock, is — significantly, I think — a Bodhi or Peepal Tree under which Gautama became the "Buddha" (the Enlightened one) and a Neem Tree, sacred to the Hindus. It is as though the Lord were saying: If you truly drink in peace and love from *my* heart during *your* prayer and meditation, *you will also become bridge-builders, peace-makers* between warring religions and people; and like me, become *reconcilers*. This particular painting speaks eloquently of our own Ashram's desires and ethos. Any Ashram should be essentially a seedbed of peace and reconciliation, open to all, rich or poor, educated or illiterate, of any nation, religion, caste.

Those of us living in institutions, parish houses, bishops houses, etc., might well ask ourselves if we really have Christ-like hearts and hearths in our openness of welcome and sharing. Or do we resemble more St James' man in the allocation of seats? I have seen one Delhi convent where the uneducated poor servant sits at table with the Sisters for meals. Recently, travelling with a poor old villager, I happened to stop at a Catholic institution known on the whole to be very open and hospitable. But this shabbily clad old man, who had travelled a good deal with me and had shared his meals with us on the floor of the ashram, could not come and dine with me. Of course, I was given the usual explanations: he would not feel at home, he is not used to sitting at table, he would not understand the language or the conversation . . . If Jesus were there, would he not have made him feel at home and brought him into the conversation? What could friendship and openness mean in a caste-ridden country like ours, where caste is vibrant even among Christian religious (I will not say 'spiritual') leaders, priests and nuns? I asked a Hindu Brahmin in the Ashram if he would mind a Dalit cooking and living with him. He said: No, *he* would not mind, but people outside may speak badly of the Ashram. "That," I replied "would be a joy for us."

I am not doing propaganda for ashrams. I merely want to point out, with concrete examples from daily life, what *Sarva Dharma Maitri* can imply — for in India, religion and caste still often go together. And in all countries some form or other of casteism and social discrimination can hinder this "*Ahimsic* revolution" that alone can transform our selfish world into an abode of love and peace for all.

In many countries, to be sure, different forms of friendship between religions are tried out. Thus in London — where today over a million Muslims, Jews, Baha'is, Hindus, Buddhists, live with Christians and post-Christians — the Westminster Interfaith Programme organises for July 1992 a summer school where people will visit different holy places — a 'pilgrimage' to mosques, temples, churches; will hear speakers of different faiths and share homes and meals with people of other religions. This kind of education can surely also make the peace movement move on and form friendships between people of a fragmented world.

(iii) *Meditation* is another and perhaps the most powerful weapon for peace we have and can use. It can be more powerful for usher-



ing in peace and life than the nuclear or any other twenty-first century bombs are or will be in ushering despair and death. It is generally neglected as a means of spreading peace or not sufficiently exploited for this purpose, except perhaps by Maharishi Maheshyogi. He has for years developed efficient and thorough methods, well-planned and executed in the USA and other countries. In Holland there is an "army" of people: they were 500 when I last heard of them; he wants 1000. They do meditation with the explicit purpose of spreading peace in the world. Transcendental meditation is systematically taught in his many schools in India. Though at the beginning it seems to cater only to psychological peace and more effective concentration, in the long run it brings one to God and is primarily meant to gain That.

An important prerequisite is that one should be in peace with oneself in order to *become an instrument of God's peace*. One should realise, too, that it is not one's own peace but God — the God who *is* Peace — being allowed to breathe forth His Spirit of peace through us out into the world. "My peace I give unto you, not as the world gives do I give unto you," said the Lord Jesus. One has to learn the art of being still and know the 'I am'. Swami Paramananda of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission, speaking of concentration and meditation says: "*The main idea of concentration is to make of ourselves a channel, so clear, so direct, so unbiased, that through our instrumentality the power of Divinity can flow and accomplish its great end.*"

Meditation is thus a practical method of becoming what we pray for in the Prayer of St Francis (or attributed to him): "Lord make me an instrument of your peace." This flow of peace goes on even after the "sitting" meditation, as long as we do not consciously put any blocks to it through our egoism. Swami Sivananda in fact defines meditation as "an unceasing flow of God-consciousness." I have only to "remain in Him" — conscious of Him: He will do the rest. Not easy, but well worth trying! It gives us peace and allows that peace to flow on, like a 'living stream', into the hearts of those needing peace, the violent hearts who perhaps do not even realise that they need peace. Oscar Romero, Helder Camera and other such people of God rightly insisted that social justice activists had first to become non-violent otherwise they fight in vain to bring about justice and peace. And the only way for ourselves to become peace and love is through allowing ourselves time to *be*. This 'being' or contemplation will then flow forth into effective action, sometimes without even our knowing it.

Because I was convinced of this, I began forming groups — small and unpublicised — of meditators committing themselves to meditate daily for “*peace of the world*.” The vibrations are all the more powerful if sent out collectively. Out of this conviction and the previous one on the importance of inter-faith prayer, action, dialogue, friendships, I conceived the possibility of a *shanti yatra* — a peace-pilgrimage to the tension-filled area of Hindu-Muslim animosity. I “conceived”? Three years ago, in 1990, I kept hearing, “Go and sit in Ayodhya.” This was the origin of the experience I share below which is really a combination of the convictions shared above.

(iv) *Peace-meditation in Ayodhya was practiced with people of other faiths.* After months of wondering and saying to God or to myself, “But I can sit here and meditate for peace in Ayodhya,” I decided to consult my Hindu Guru. I asked if it was really the Spirit’s call or was I perhaps romanticising? His answer was simple. “Even if it were romanticising, why not go and sit?” I told him that while sharing this at an Indian Theological Association meeting in South India, a couple of people had spontaneously come up and said they too would come — if the dates suited them. One, Tom Kochery of the National Fisherworkers’ Forum, said that if he could not come, he would send a group Hindus, Muslims and Christians. I was told, however, to go first on my own on a ‘reconnoitre-visit’ to see how dangerous it might be, what the police guarding the Temple/Mosque area were like, etc. In the course of 1991 I went twice. I experienced a very positive reception from the police who inspected everyone — and everyone’s possessions — thoroughly, as each entered the premises. Thousands of people came; there was noise, jostling, perennial kirtan (singing the name of Ram) by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad organisers. It was far from a peaceful place to sit for quiet or meditation. I was given special permission to sit in a corner of the temple. Normally no one was allowed to sit. People came through one entrance, passed through the central part - the *mandir* - and exited by the third door, after doing a few minutes of *pooja* and receiving the *prasad* (the blessing of fruit or sweets). The next day again I spent some hours sitting. I decided I would go and sound the top police officials on how it would work out if I came back with a small group of meditators. They were naturally intrigued by the plan of “just sitting” in silence. They thought there should be no trouble if the group were not big and did not have obviously “muslim-looking” people. I was told one such large group had been arrested.

We then decided to meet in Delhi: groups from the South and East were to join a little group I would bring from the North. But a few days previous to our date of beginning the *yatra*, Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated. I received word that it might be wiser to postpone our venture.

In February 1992 we tried again. Though I was told they would be coming and they even had their ticket bought, I was disappointed that the group had no Muslims. This time the atmosphere in Ayodhya was quite different. The crowds were far smaller. There was an ominous quiet. Though the unmusical, unprayerful kirtan singers were still at it, the pujari (priest) had comparatively little work to do. He was not throwing the garlands and sweets here and there as when he was rushed by the milling crowds of last year. He even had time to be gracious with me, as I asked him to place my garland over a particular picture I had fancied on my previous visits.

It was the *Ram-Hanuman Milan*, the meeting/embracing of the two, that had caught my eye as soon as I had entered the 'mosque' part of the building. My eyes had filled with tears as I imagined Hanuman saying, "Hai Ram! What is happening? In the very place where *your* Name should be sung and praised people are killing each other *in Your Name!*" It felt strange that Sri Hanuman should be nonplused, he who had a solution for all problems, the all powerful symbol of *Prana*, the vital energy, the breath or Wind God; symbol too, one might add, of the *Spiritus* (Breath) of God. But Ram was peaceful and smiling as though he were saying with Julian or Norwich, "All shall be well . . ."

This time permission was not given for us to sit in meditation inside the temple, except for ten minutes. The people being less numerous, we were more noticeable. They came and stared, mostly quietly, sometimes a voice was heard asking a wondering question. The 'major' saw to it that no one disturbed us. When we left, we found the people and the police quieter, even smiling more confidently.

We sat under a tree just outside the temple; we sat by the Saryu river who like any holy river, kept flowing, bearing with people who came for holy baths or to wash their clothes, etc. We meditated on Kuber Til, a hillock where Sri Ram is said to have kept his wealth, Kuber being the God of wealth. We could see the three clear 'domes' from the back of the temple as we sat on this hill: a perfect and complete sight of the situation and the site!

A Jesuit friend who was to have joined us but could not come had suggest *pavan dham hamara kam* as our motto: "A holy place (any holy place) is our duty/work" — to see that it should not be profaned. Whenever we went to meditate, in various small and big, beautiful and less beautiful temples (Ayodhya claims 4000 temples!), we felt quite safe.

In the Tulsi Ram Charitmanas Trust Dharamshala (inn) where we shared a room, they welcomed me with smiles as though we were long-time friends. The head was a spiritual and learned man. He spoke eloquently on the importance of constant "*sumira*" — "Remembrance of the Name said with true devotion." He was steeped in the saint-poet Tulsidas's works. The inn had an atmosphere of an Ashram. This helped us to remain present to the Presence even outside our meditation hours.

*How did we meditate together?* In silent rhythm. All were naturally free to use their own normal methods of entering into Inner Silence — be it the Name or Mantra, or breath or visualising . . . But a suggestion was made that the Buddhist method of breath awareness might help us most — to receive peace, for ourselves first as we inhaled, and to send it out to others as we exhaled, remaining always conscious that it was *His Peace* that God would breathe out through our instrumentality if we took care not to block His action.

We began *with the body*, visualising breath as a light or seeing our awareness as a warm ray and gradually spreading it over the whole body, lightly focusing our attention especially on the head, face, chest and heart region . . . , and down to the limbs. As we breathed in, we directed peace, patient kindness, to ourselves, to the parts of bodies, "Peace to . . ."

Then *the psyche*: the mind and heart, beginning by exhaling any negativities, violence, anger, resentment, jealousy, etc.; breathing in peace, patience, tolerance, forgiveness — whatever we needed. On the outbreath we let go any form of stress, worry, anxiety, etc. The calming effect of a kindly accepting attitude towards ourselves prepared us to be better channels; accepting-allowing whatever we felt: fatigue, anxiety, pain; attentively allowing it 'to be' — whatever we experienced. This, and attention to the body, were a useful anchor for the wandering mind. After a while we were, or felt we were, ready to breathe peace outwards — beginning with someone we loved. Then friendly acquaintances, those to whom we felt indifferent: "may they be at peace." And then those we feared or disliked, and finally all violent hearts — near and far, and those who sur-

rounded us — for the *Sarva Dharma Maitri* had to become a reality here and now.

### And the Result?

That is not for us to know. Only God knows — and cares. That we became more aware and perhaps more compassionate is reward enough. A priest friend had asked me: "And do you think by your going there, the troubles there will end?" He sounded doubtful. I said that karma yoga did not expect any reward. Ours is but to do and let God be and do. That is sufficient. Every tiniest prayer and effort at meditation is heeded by God and doubtless at least some measure of violence has been dispelled off this planet, this beautiful earth of ours.

Peace to the East; Peace to the West;

Peace to the North; Peace to the South;

Peace above us; Peace below us.

May each of us become peacebearers.

Om shanti!

## A New Kind of Christian Mission

Catherine Berry STIDSEN

In April 1992, Catherine Stidsen introduced VJTR readers to the thought of William Ernest Hocking, in particular his theory of the reconception of Christianity. In this follow-up article she explains how in Hocking's thought, this requires a new kind of Christian mission to supplement the more traditional approaches. Four trips to India have convinced her that this new kind of mission is most likely to begin in India and has in fact, in many ways, already begun here through the Catholic Ashram Movement, through the reaching out to their world religious neighbours, of the staff and associates, past and present, of the National Biblical, Catechetical and Liturgical Centre in Bangalore, and of persons at the grass roots working to effect basic human communities. She offers this essay to assist those processes.

**W**illiam Ernest Hocking was concerned that Christianity become a more and more adequate vessel of truth. Indeed, he wanted that for all living religions, because he was convinced that the living religion which eventually contained within itself the best of other living religions, and more, would evolve as the world faith, without which he saw no possibility of a world community. He was moreover convinced that the reconception of Christianity to make of it a more adequate vessel of truth was likely to come from the East. He wrote:

I believe that we shall see in the Orient the rise of a Christianity far out - passing that which we of the West have conceived, simply because it can recover there so many lost fragments of what is its own. Our western religion has gone literal, through much struggle with a literal-minded race: religion advances out of the poetic and imaginative toward the literal, and where there is still poetry, the springs of religion are still young. And in those springs we may well meet in their original freshness some of the ancient, eternal sources of our faith.<sup>1</sup>

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1. William Ernest HOCKING, *Living Religions and a World Faith* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1940), p. 187.

Hocking went on to write that Christians in the East, in India in particular, have this kind of poetry all about them, and it was likely for that reason that the much-needed reconception of Christianity will come from them.

### No Displacement, no Synthesis

We saw in the April article that Hocking rejected the way of radical displacement of one religion by another as mean-spirited, among other things. He rejected the "synthesis" of one religion by another for three reasons primarily, and these need to be explained in some detail to make clear the kind of new Christian mission centre which Hocking had in mind, and why.

Hocking saw some kind of synthesis as preliminary to the reconception of any living religion, but this was not enough to make for a world faith because: (1) synthesis is not a policy; (2) synthesis is not a deliberate and competitive activity; (3) synthesis is not a real solution to the disagreements among religions. Hocking wants a policy, not serendipitous happenings, for Christians to encounter their world religious neighbours. He insists that Christians must be involved in initiating good will to make a better world a reality. In addition to a policy, and determined, active competition to effect the integral human development of peoples, Hocking is looking for an approach to world religions which will resolve the differences among religions. For him, synthesis does not do that.

Clearly it [synthesis] is one of those processes which leads to the convergence of different religions without solving the issues between them. Further, it is not a complete operation; it is but the assembling stage preliminary to a further process of thought.<sup>2</sup>

### Broadening and Deepening

The convergence of religion is, therefore, not sufficient for Hocking. Only the reconception model will effect what he is after. Religions, like persons, must go through a "broadening" which means an accumulation of experiences, and then in the process of incorporating these experiences into their lives, a "deepening" occurs. This is the rhythm inherent in human maturity and must be the process inherent in the living religions, that is, in religions that want to grow. Writing in 1940, Hocking was convinced that humanity was at the dawn of a new religious *deepening* which would result from

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2. *Ibid.*, p. 189.

religious *broadening* because the time was so right for this. He saw that era as the time "when the several great systems of faith are brought . . . into intimate contact."<sup>3</sup>

Given the profusion of religious expressions, Hocking is convinced that increasing numbers of persons are beginning to look for what is the best in these expressions, rather than to reject them outright. Thinking persons want to incorporate the new insights into their lives, and into the guiding principles of their lives, their religions. This is the process of "reconception," but the reconception of a religion, or of any enterprise for that matter, requires that one be sure of the religion's essence.<sup>4</sup> Hocking is convinced that one needs to know the essence of one's own religion and that of the other religion or religions one is experiencing. The essence of a religion for Hocking is the "generating principle of religious life and of each particular form of it."<sup>5</sup> Hocking admits that understanding this essence is difficult as the early councils of both Buddhism and Christianity make clear. Yet, when religious persons encounter each other in the process of understanding and reconceiving their own traditions, religion will increase its credibility for the modern era. He explains,

The age before us will be to just that extent relieved of unreal contentions or estrangements. And few things discredit the position of organized religion in the mind of modern man so much as artificial or verbal antagonisms on the part of the one association devoted to the moral unity of mankind.<sup>6</sup>

Knowing the essence or induction of a religion is not enough. One cannot miss the function of *believers* in a tradition, especially in religions "not found in books," of the sort which he encountered in his Asian tour. If one were to look only for the generating principle of a religion it would be an abuse of that tradition. He writes, "To

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3. *Ibid.*, pp. 190-91.

4. For an understanding of how Hocking's theory of reconception can be used in the reconstruction of things political see Robert Byron THIGPEN, *Liberty and Community: The Political Philosophy of William Ernest Hocking* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1972) and John R. STACER, S.J., "The Hope of a World Citizen: Beyond National Individualism," *Beyond Individualism* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), pp. 188-216. The implications of Hocking's thought for social reconstruction are explored in A.R. LUTHER, *Existence as Dialectical Tension* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968).

5. William Ernest HOCKING, *Living Religions and a World Faith*, p. 191.

6. William Ernest HOCKING, *The Coming World Civilization* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956), p. 145.



find the life which runs to the various members is not to cancel the members. To find the law which describes the growth of a tree is not to cancel the tree."<sup>7</sup>

Hocking had met both Gandhiji and Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar during his Asian sojourn and suggested that they are prime examples of persons involved in searching for the essence of their own religious traditions as much as any thoughtful Christian might. He admitted that his process of reconception tended toward a decision, and why shouldn't it? It makes sense that persons would gravitate toward a religion which seeks to be the best possible vehicle of truth. Writing in 1940, just two years after his work on Protestant missions and their re-thinking had been rejected at the meeting of the International Missionary Council in Tambaram, Madras, Hocking lashed out at religions refusing to consider a reconception of their traditions:

When all religions are losing their holds on multitudes no one can say that any of them is doing too well, through its human representatives, what a religion has to do for the soul of man! They are all wretched vessels. They are all wrapped in sanctimony, dusty-eyed with self-satisfaction, still-jointed with the rheum-rust of their creedal conceits, so timorous under the whips of conformity that only a few dare the perilous task of *thinking*, and the complacency-disturbing task of trying the spirit of other faiths. They wear the aspect of senility, while the world is crying to them to be young; they can no longer take a true creed to their lips, and have it carry the meaning of truth, since the blood, life, passion are gone out of it, and it has become a festoon of dried husks. Men are not unready for faith, even for concrete and particular faith, if they can find life in it.<sup>8</sup>

This language is actually moderate in terms of the six scathing paragraphs which follow which pose the specific questions which religions must answer if they are going to have anything to offer contemporary humanity.<sup>9</sup>

By way of some answers to the questions he poses, Hocking maintains that the world faith will emerge from the living religion which most truly diagnoses the "root of the malady" of suffering and meaninglessness, without relying on "tinselled and sugared otherworldliness." It will emerge from the religion which will save people from greed, lust, hatred, hypocrisy, duplicity and pretence,

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7. William Ernest HOCKING, *World Religions and a World Faith*, p. 195.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 202.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 202-203.

without "destroying their virility and effectiveness" in the social order. It will emerge from the religion which is most "fertile" in enhancing the life of the arts. He writes,

When the religions realise that these are the questions which they must eventually meet, and that no charter from the Most High God will excuse them from meeting them, nor give them any dominion on the earth if they do not, the search for their own essence may become, as it is due to be, a grace and anxious search rather than any mere exercise of scholarly speculation.<sup>10</sup>

### Wanted. A New Institution

Hocking was convinced that no contemporary Christian mission institution could, as a policy, in a deliberate way, and with determination to resolve differences, respond to this real and immediate need to understand the essences of the living religions and their believers and so to effect reconception. Hocking wanted a new kind of institution not to supplant those traditionally found in Christianity but to supplement them. He writes.

This process needs a new institution. Though Reconception is always going on, wherever religious self-consciousness is alive, it requires in the present world-period, for its favourable pursuit, an institution widely different from the usual type of Protestant mission — not to supplant that mission but to supplement it.<sup>11</sup>

Hocking wants it to be actually part and parcel of Christian mission to offer to the living religions places where these searches for essences, and the reconception process, can take place. He is very clear about the differences between this new kind of mission institution and those which were presently found in the Protestant missionary world.

The mission is set for teaching; the required institution must be set for learning as well. The mission is set for the announcement of doctrine; this institution must be set as well for conversation and conference. The mission is set for activity; this institution must be set also for leisure, contemplation, study. The mission is set for address to its own region; this institution must be set for give and take with the thought and feeling of a nation and a world.<sup>12</sup>

Members of living religions are to learn from and with each other in these institutions, and true to his conviction that the life of

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10. *Ibid.*, pp. 203-205.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 205.

12. *Ibid.*

the believers is as important as the doctrine of the living religion, the members of the institute are to encounter each other in all facets of their living, in relaxation and in work pursuits. Again, true to his conviction that it is the evolution of a *world* faith that is required, it is not just national concerns, but global issues that must be at the heart of the living inquiry in these new kinds of mission institutions.

The intellectual inquiry, the moments of leisure are not enough for the process that Hocking wants to effect. We have seen his concern that believers should worship with each other, and his desire that Christians, in particular, learn to meditate from their Eastern religious neighbours. He wants facilities for worship in the centres, not just for Christian worship. Also the conviction that a universal religion will never replace the need for local religions means, for him, that the religious leadership of the area in which the institutions will be located will appreciate what it is trying to do. He describes this worship and benevolent attitude as follows:

The essential parts of such an institution are, beside the quarters for living and hospitality, the library, the facilities for conference, meditation, worship, the good will of the religious leadership of all groups in the region, access to natural solitude and to the life of the city and country.<sup>13</sup>

Hocking actually hoped that even prior to this kind of mission institution there would also be established a place in which to be trained in the art, thought, and literature of the surrounding culture. To this training place, and to the new kind of mission institution, would come "reflective observers" who will reconceive their own religious traditions, mystics, who may be theologians and academics, but who will know that the Mind at the heart of the world is Ultimately Good, and out of that knowledge and experience live in prophetic consciousness, viz., the conviction that what they do matters.

Hocking had seen some attempts at this kind of institute. He was especially intrigued by Rabindranath Tagore's ashram at Shantiniketan, "where Hindu, Christian, Moslem, Buddhist find themselves at home," but he wished for centres more specifically aimed at effecting reconception than was Tagore's. He foresaw

a chain of centres set around the world, hospitable to qualified enquirers, and contributing — as centres of art contribute to the life of art — to sustain the continuing enterprise of reconceiving religion through world culture, and world culture through religion.<sup>14</sup>

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13. *Ibid.*

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 205-207.

Hocking was not completely wrong in this insight. By 1970 there were Hocking-like centres set around the world, three of them in India, working under the aegis of the World Council of Churches, but not precisely with this aim of reconception in mind.<sup>15</sup>

By 1956, Hocking was even more insistent that mystics across religious traditions had to find ways to come together. He writes that to affirm one's own religion does not logically require the exclusion of another, because the "several universal religions are already fused together, so to speak, at the top." He invites religious persons to seek out those who are "at peace," and to come to know them and to engage in "reverence for reverence" of them and of their religious tradition. He calls for "consociation" for work and worship among such persons, and it seems almost as if he has lost hope that the kinds of centres he has envisioned will come to happen under Christian auspices.<sup>16</sup>

Wistfully, Hocking suggests that Jesus' injunction to lose one's life in order to find it might be what Christianity is presently called upon to do, lose its corporate name in order to find its real life, its authentic essence. He is concerned that many contemporary Christians seem involved in a "will to costless comfort" instead of a will "to create through suffering," which for him is part of the essence of Christianity.

We have been too easily satisfied to say that Christianity is the religion of love, without noting that the love of God toward man can be no regime of moral ease . . . . Let me put it thus: our Christianity is in need of reconception through a deeper and humbler intercourse with the soul of the East, in its age-long acceptance of a searching self-discipline.<sup>17</sup>

In summary, Hocking is seeking for a new kind of Christian mission institution, one in which through leisurely work and worship, reflective observers, mystics, will learn from and with each other. In a process of broadening and then deepening their insights into their own religious traditions, they will reconceive them. When one of the living religions contains within all that is best of the others and more, a world faith will evolve from it, which will make possible a world community.

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15. Gerard VALLE, *Mouvement Oecuménique et Religions non Chrétiennes* (Desclée: Paris et Tournai/Bellarmin: Montreal, 1975), pp. 284-86.

16. William Ernest HOCKING, *The Coming World Civilization*, pp. 140-49.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 164-65.

## In India Today and Tomorrow

During my first trip to India, December-January 1987-88, when I was just beginning to become familiar with Dr Hocking's thought, I experienced first-hand the kind of reaching out to others that he urged on Christians. Primarily this occurred through my coming to understand and experience the pastoral thrust of the Archdiocese of Nagpur, through my friend and colleague in that city, Archbishop Leobard D'Souza. The neighborhood groups established in Nagpur, and the village groups in the Archdiocese, among persons on the margins of Indian political, social and economic life, are precisely the kinds of consociation for work and worship that Hocking was calling for in 1956. More than once I have heard Archbishop D'Souza invite his Catholics to "look, listen, learn, love, live."<sup>18</sup> Although the Archbishop had not heard of Dr Hocking then (he has since from me, perhaps *ad nauseam*), he was moving precisely in the direction that Hocking was urging, not only in this regard but in many others in terms of overall mission efforts of both the traditional and innovative varieties.<sup>19</sup>

During that first visit to India, and subsequent ones, I have had the opportunity to come to understand the thinking about the "integration" of world religions, as it has been called, at the National Biblical, Catechetical and Liturgical Centre in Bangalore, especially in the thought of its first director, Fr. D.S. Amalorpavadass, so effectively documented recently, in terms of its first fifteen years, by the present associate director, Fr J.A.G. Gerwin van Leeuwen, O.F.M. The constant emphasis on consultation with members of other religions and of other Christian denominations, who are always invited to the Centre's research seminars, and other activities, is precisely in the spirit of what Dr Hocking was hoping for. And although I have not described it in these two essays in VJTR, Hocking's theory of an

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18. A succinct explanation of the Archbishop's approach and vision appears in Leobard D'SOUZA, "Church Renewal: Looking Ahead," *Word & Worship*, Vol. XXV, July-August, No. 6, pp. 206-211. Cf. *The Church in Nagpur for Service of the People*, a description of the pastoral thrust printed privately in 1981 on the occasion of the silver jubilee of the Archbishop's priestly ordination. An updating of the pastoral plan appeared in 1989 on the occasion of the silver anniversary of his episcopal ordination. Copies are available in the archives of Archbishop's House, Mohan Nagar P.O., Nagpur 440 001, India.

19. William Ernest HOCKING, *Re-Thinking Missions: A Laymen's Inquiry After One Hundred Years* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1932), *passim*.

"unbound Christ" is very similar to Christological positions take by Fr Amalor.

On two of my four visits to India, I have had the opportunity to come to know in detail the work of Caritas India, especially its present emphasis on animation programmes. Like the Nagpur pastoral thrust, it proposes the integral human development of all peoples, exactly as Dr Hocking once described the essence of Christianity. I have also had the opportunity in person and through their writings to come to understand the Catholic Ashram movement as understood especially by Sr Sara Grant, R.S.C.J., and Vandana Mataji. It was with a special joy that I found a description of the worship connected with the ashram in Sara Grant's writings as a commitment to "reverence for reverence" on the part of the worshipers of all religious traditions.<sup>20</sup> Hocking began using that language as early as 1932. The expression may even have been coined by him. I have also come to know and appreciate persons who have studied at ISI, Delhi. Their concern with holiness equalling wholeness is in the Hocking vein.

I have not yet, however, found in India nor elsewhere in terms of my research, precisely the kind of new Christian mission institution which Dr Hocking was hoping for, one *dedicated* to the reconception of Christianity and of all the living religions, which will effect a world faith. Still, my experiences in the country and my intuition tell me that when it comes, and come it will, Mother India will be its home, and Indian Catholics will be its nurturers. This essay is offered in the firm hope that it may in some small way help to hasten that coming, with or without any mention of William Ernest Hocking connected with it.<sup>21</sup>

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20. Sara GRANT, R.S.C.J., "Shared Prayer and Sharing Scriptures," *Sharing Worship* (*Communicatio in Sacris*) (Bangalore: St. Mary's Press, 1988).

21. The recognized expert on the thought of William Ernest Hocking is Leroy Stephens ROUNER. His major work is *Within Human Experience: The Philosophy of William Ernest Hocking* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969). In the conclusion to this book Rouner comments that it is "possible to be helped by Hocking without becoming a Hockingian in the process. This fact points up both what is the strength and the weakness of Hocking's philosophical system."

## **"Pastores dabo vobis..."**

### **Reflection on the Pope's Exhortation on Priestly Formation**

G. GISPert-SAUCH, S.J.

As it has now become customary, the Pope has recently published a "Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation" addressed to the bishops, clergy and faithful, incorporating the work done at the Synod of Bishops held in October 1990. The theme of the Exhortation, like that of the Synod, is formulated as "the formation of priests in the circumstances of the present day." As could be expected, however, the Exhortation covers a much wider field and includes rich reflections on the theology and the spirituality of the priests.

**T**he subject is not new, and one may even wonder whether there is not a surfeit of writings on the priests, with the danger that they become the only focus of attention of the Church's teaching and they themselves develop a centre-of-the-stage or an elitist complex. The danger need not be denied, even if one must affirm that in the life of the Catholic Church as it is at present there is little doubt that the priests have a vital role. The Exhortation is aware of this abundance of material on the priesthood since Vatican II. After recalling the references to the theme in the Synods of 1967, 1971 and 1974 the Pope continues: "It may be said that in the years since the Council there has not been any subject treated by the Magisterium which has not in some way, explicitly or implicitly, had to do with the presence of priests in the community as well as their role and the need for them in the life of the Church and the world" (3). To add to it all, the next Synod is going to be on the religious, many of whom are priests, but who are of course a wider reality.

The Exhortation is one of the longest papal documents — 225 pages in the Vatican edition, 25 closely printed large pages of the *Osservatore Romano* (Eng. ed.) of 8 April 1992. (The Exhortation is signed on the 25th March 1992.) The topic is treated in six chapters,

besides introduction and conclusion. The first chapter describes the characteristic challenges of our generation at the end of the second millenium, with their positive elements (thirst for justice, peace, God . . . , the vitality of the Church in central and eastern Europe...) and negative or problematic factors (subjectivism, practical atheism, gap between "peoples," "inhuman capitalism," break-up of family, distorted meaning of sexuality, religious pluralism new in traditionally Christian countries). These factors affect young people and the priests too and require Gospel discernment. One may think that the analysis is valid but reflects primarily the situation as seen from Europe.

Chapter 2 deals with the nature and mission of the ministerial priesthood. Chapter 3 on the spirituality of the priesthood. Chapter 4 presents a fine reflection on vocation. Chapter 5 deals with the formation of priests at various levels and ch. 6 on ongoing formation. The conclusion ends with prayer to Mary "Mother of Jesus Christ and Mother of priests."

## Priests Today

The Pope notes that the reality of the priesthood, and therefore the formation of priests, hinge on two elements: one permanent, unchangeable, rooted in God and his work in Christ and Christ's ministry; the other, a changeable element as the priesthood is lived through the centuries and in different cultures: this demands a training "in the circumstances of the present day." This remark is important. It tells us not to judge the formation given in seminaries today by the standards and criteria of the formation given 50 years ago: the circumstances have changed, so has the formation. What one can legitimately ask is whether present day formation prepares priests to fulfil their role in the circumstances of our day. But it is not only time, but culture situations that must be considered. Each culture will need to apply the general principles of the Exhortation to its concrete situation. This is an ongoing process. A landmark in India was the *Charter of Priestly Formation* approved by the CBCI in 1988. This needs now to be implemented.

There is undoubtedly in the Exhortation a very rich theology of the priestly ministry. The keynote is perhaps struck with the opening words: *Pastores dabó vobis*, "I shall give you shepherds" — a quotation from Jer 3:15 which in its original context refers to the national leadership of Juda in the time of its division and exile, but which is here understood of the leadership in the Church, and specifically the priests. The priest is described primarily by the biblical



metaphor of shepherd. We need to spell out here the many aspects of this metaphor both in the OT and the NT and the later tradition: what is important is that it defines the priest primarily with reference to the flock, to the people. The priestly office is a *pastoral* office, an office in respect to a group of people. There is of course a danger of overextending, consciously or unconsciously, the shepherd image to suggest that the flock are "sheep" — to be led, with love perhaps but paternalistically . . . . Nothing is further from the stress of the Exhortation or the Bible: the stress is in the interpersonal relationship. The shepherd *knows* the sheep and *calls them by name*. He shares their life, their joys and sorrows. And we know how important it is, specially for poor people, the people who do not count, who are ignored, who are bossed over everywhere by employers, landlords, masters, the police, government officials, husbands, if they can count on someone to speak to them, who knows them, is interested in them. This is the reason of the ancient practice of pastors visiting families individually. *Pastores dabo vobis*. "People need to be known and called by name, to walk in safety along the paths of life, to be found again if they have become lost, to be loved, to receive salvation as the supreme gift of God's love. All this is done by Jesus, the Good Shepherd — by himself and by his priests with him" (82).

This does not mean that the sacramental or even the sacral aspects of the priestly ministry is ignored: they cannot. But it does mean that they are placed in the context of the priest's relation to the community: the sabbath is for man . . . . His relation to the people is primary. The terminology of pastor used by many other churches is fully justified if it does not thereby deny a priestly function to the leader, in union with the one priest Jesus Christ.

## A Problem of Terminology

The Pope, quoting himself in an Angelus address says: "When Jesus lived on this earth, he manifested in himself the definitive role of the priest, by establishing a ministerial priesthood, with which the Apostles were the first to be invested. This priesthood is destined to last in endless succession throughout history" (5). Readers of the *Vidyajyoti Journal* will remember the article by G. Soares-Prabhu in February this year who, following the accepted view of scripture scholars and historians, said that "priesthood" is applied to Jesus in the NT in a theological, not in a sociological sense, and that it refers to his saving death rather than his ministry. He also showed that the followers of Jesus were not "priests." The Exhorta-

tion might seem to contradict glaringly this scholarly view. In fact it is clearly a question of terminology, of different meanings given to the term priest.

What the Pope is in effect saying is that the apostolic vocation as developed by Jesus himself in his ministry and as passed on by him to the Apostles is what actually the Christian tradition means by priesthood: it is essentially a pastorate. Whatever the term 'priest' may have meant in the OT and whatever it means in the history of religions (generally a *cultic* function) is not to be taken as the primary meaning in the Christian tradition: a priest is one who continues the apostolic charism in its office of shepherding the community. The primary point of reference is the prophetic call of Lk 4:20: "He sent me to give the good news to the poor" (11). In this new sense the apostles were priests, although admittedly the Hebrew term for priests in the old sense does not apply to them. The Catholic 'priesthood' must be understood in this sense too.

## Two Ecclesiological Models

We mentioned that there are negative aspects in the metaphor of shepherding. Besides the problem of the identity, freedom and maturity of the flock, there arises out of this metaphor an ecclesiological model which is damaging to Christian life. It is the model of God-in-Christ/Priest/Church (laity). The priest receives his commission to shepherd the flock, and his action and responsibility terminates in the Christian flock. The world at large is short-circuited, and 98% (in India) of God's people fall outside the dynamic of God's saving activity. Consciously or unconsciously, much of our self-understanding rotates around this model. We assess a priest's work in terms of sacramental activity, masses, communions, confessions, or of help given to Christian families and participation in Christian movements. The large world is mostly at the periphery, only subliminally known...

A more satisfactory model would be God-in-Christ/Church (laity with clergy)/world. In this model the whole Church is mediatory of salvation, priestly in respect to the world. In this model the identity of the priest is, like in the first, in relation to the community of the faithful, but this community is not just a flock, the object of the pastoral activity, but itself a priestly community entrusted with the work of mediating God's salvation to the wide world. The priest is a unifying factor within the priestly community with a specific role. I think that this is the model that is implied in the theological vision of the priesthood presented by the Exhortation.

The power of the two models should not be minimised, and it would seem that we work mostly on the basis of the first model. The Exhortation speaks of the crisis of vocations in many places in the Church. We know that this is not generally the case in India. By God's grace, vocations are generally abundant and on the whole steady. But there is crisis of "mission": the problem is that the Christian community as a whole does not seem to have any special "good news" it can mediate to the country, and that in general it does not feel competent to do it even if it knew the message and wanted to deliver it. Our community could be said to be a community desirous of surviving, struggling for life in a competitive world, not a community that feels itself competent to contribute something new and important to the world.

The Exhortation defines the Church as "a mystery of Trinitarian communion in missionary tension" (12). Three elements form the reality of the Church: *mystery* (rootedness in the Trinity), *communion* of its members, and *mission* (59). Do we live all these dimensions?

The chapter on priestly spirituality starts where it should, i.e., with the Spirit of God, who anoints the priest to conform him to Christ and enables him to relate as pastor to the community and with the community to the world. The priest is at the service of the Spirit, not Her controller. He has to follow the lead of the Spirit as Jesus followed it in his lifetime. He must not allow the institution to drown Her creativity and initiative.

But the Spirit does not lead to individualism. The priest is essentially a community person. He comes from the Church, works in the Church and for the Church — for a Church called to be at the service of the world. The Church is not a collection of charismatics with individual vocations, but a people made one by the unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit (35).

The Exhortation uses often an expression from the 7th proposition of the synod to the effect that the priest is not only "in" the Church but also "in the forefront of" (*erga*) the Church (16) signifying thereby that he is not only a "sacramental representative of Christ but also a constitutive element of the Church". At the end of the Exhortation the Pope inverts the order: the priest is not only "in the forefront of" (*coram*) the Church but *above all* "in" the Church (74). His membership, based on baptism, is what is primary and needs to be deepened in his priestly consciousness. The community is more important than the hierarchy. And his role is building the

community in which he is immersed into a "mission" for service — the service of "salvation."

### What Type of Leadership?

It is not infrequently that priests bemoan the lack of a sense of mission in the laity who seem to be satisfied with fulfilling their liturgical obligations. Is it a question of formation? spirituality? fear? sociology? It would be useful to examine also our ways of exercising the ministry. Not seldom we act as "bosses." We are not accustomed to styles of collective leadership, to consultative and deliberative votes, to accepting what the group thinks best when not the priest's own option. The Exhortation calls on the priest to be shepherd, bridegroom, and even "mother" in the community (22), to exercise "pastoral charity" as the unifying charism in the priest's life, or, in the words of St Augustine, the *officium amoris*. The *gratia capitis* conferred by Holy Orders is the grace to be conformed to him who came to serve and not to be served and to give his life for the ransom of many. The "lording over them" is the denial of the priestly vocation.

This *munus regendi* represents a very delicate and complex duty which, in addition to the attention which must be given to a variety of persons and their vocations, also involves the ability to coordinate all the gifts and charisms which the Spirit inspires in the community, to discern them and to put them to good use for the upbuilding of the Church in constant union with the Bishops. This ministry demands of the priest an intense spiritual life, filled with those qualities and virtues which are typical of a person who "presides over" and "leads" a community, of an "elder" in the noblest and richest sense of the word: qualities and virtues such as faithfulness, integrity, consistency, wisdom, a welcoming spirit, friendliness, goodness of heart, decisive firmness in essentials, freedom from overly subjective viewpoints, personal disinterestedness, patience, an enthusiasm for daily tasks, confidence in the value of the hidden workings of grace as manifested in the simple and the poor" (26).

### Incardination and Obedience

The Exhortation speaks of both the diocesan and the religious clergy and alludes to the charisms that the religious bring to the local Church of which they are part. But much of the reflection is centred on the diocesan spirituality, specially in its theological and spiritual development of the meaning of "incardination" which "cannot be confined to a purely juridical bond, but also involves a set of

attitudes as well as spiritual and pastoral decisions which help to fill out the specific features of the priestly vocation" (31). This is of course an explanation of the significance of this bonding of the priest to a particular church, to a concrete people, even if the universal dimension of all Christian and priestly vocation is not ignored. The pastor belongs to a concrete flock, the diocesan people of God presided over by the bishop. In a sense the priest shares in the function which medieval theology and canon law articulated in respect to the bishop — he is the *sponsus ecclesiae*, the bridegroom of the Church, of course in representation of Christ.

The obedience of the priest is expressed in a sense of ecclesial correspondibility: "not the obedience of an individual who alone relates to authority, but rather an obedience which is deeply a part of the unity of the presbyterate, which as such is called to cooperate harmoniously with the Bishop and, through him, with Peter's successor" (28). This supposes a freedom which is liberated from its distortions, passivity, determinism, total autonomy and individualism (37). Without true freedom the vocation cannot be lived authentically.

## Vocation and Formation

Speaking of fostering vocations the Exhortation reminds us that as an *Ekklesia* ("called from") the Church is itself a vocation, a call from God, and that it begets vocations. All vocations issue from the midst of the Church, are lived in the Church and lead to the Church. The vocation is both a call on God's part and a human response: "Jesus) *called* to him those whom he desired and they *came* to him" (Mk 3:13). A vocation is therefore a dialogue. It is a discernment in faith for a decision and the decision itself made under the influence of the Spirit. Spiritual direction is a great help in such discernment.

The chapter on formation of the seminarians defends, with Vatican II, the institution of the Seminary as the "normal-place" for such a formation, which must attend not only to intellectual, specially theological, growth, but more specially to human and spiritual growth. The setting of the chapter is the need of that accompaniment of the vocation which was characteristic of Jesus in his dealing with the disciples whom he called. Therefore the seminary is not so much a geographical as a spiritual place, a way of life. The capacity to relate to others, to love with one's whole person, including one's body and sexuality, the education of conscience and a deep sense of mystery in a personal friendship with Christ are stressed. The semi-

narians should also be formed through pastoral ministries. "The seminary which educates must seek really and truly to initiate the candidate into the sensitivity of being a shepherd, in the conscious and mature assumption of his responsibilities, in the interior habit of evaluating problems and establishing priorities and looking for solutions on the basis of honest motivations of faith and according to the theological demands inherent in pastoral work" (58). It is to be noticed that among the agents of such a formation, priority is given to the local bishop and the local Church, even before laying the responsibility at the door of the formation personnel in the Seminaries. The Exhortation wants lay people, *both men and women*, to be involved in the work of training future priests because of the "healthy influence of lay spirituality and of the charism of femininity in every educational itinerary" (66).

As mentioned earlier, the last chapter deals with the ongoing formation of the priest which is not merely a professional updating but also a spiritual demand to grow "in every age in all conditions of life." Here the primary agent is said to be the priest himself, although the support of structures from the diocese must be available to him. He will need to grow both spiritually and intellectually "especially by a commitment to study and a serious and disciplined familiarity with modern culture . . . . In particular, continuing theological study is necessary if the priest is to faithfully carry out the ministry of the word, proclaiming it clearly and without ambiguity." (72).

This beautiful Exhortation will surely encourage priests in their ministry. They will share the sense of hope that pervades the Exhortation and the gratitude and awe with which the Holy Father concludes it at seeing how young seminarians and priests "even in the most difficult and dramatic conditions, but always with the joyous struggle to be faithful to the Lord and to serve his flock unswervingly, are offering their lives daily in order that faith, hope and charity may grow in human hearts and in the history of the men and women of our day . . . . In communion with the Synod Fathers and in the name of all the Bishops of the world and of the entire community of the Church I wish to express all the gratitude which your faithfulness and service deserve" (82). Any vocation is a miracle of grace. The priestly vocation in today's secularised world makes the miracle all the more astonishing.

## Meditation

### "Your Heavenly Father feeds them"(Mt 6:26)

#### *A Meditation on Trust in God*

The Gospel according to Matthew, chapter 6, verses 25-34, was read at a Mass for students. They shared their reactions. Many found the text very meaningful, as trusting God was something very natural to them. They claimed that God always came to their help. One of them even remembered another reading from a Sunday Liturgy: "Thus says the Lord: Cursed is the man who trusts in man . . . Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord" (*6th Sunday of the Year, Cycle C: Jer 17:5-8*). But there were also students coming from a very poor background; they experienced real poverty, they lived in the midst of great suffering. One of them said: "It is fine for you people to speak of trust in God and not be anxious when you are sure of your next meal, you have clothes, houses, etc., but I do not agree with this text. Jesus did not know my condition" He was rather violent in his reaction. I pushed his point further. I asked them all to situate themselves in the context of the millions of starving, homeless people and read the text: "Do not be anxious about . . . what you shall eat . . ." Does the Father care? How does he care? Often one finds religious and other economically better-off people being very sure of the meaning of this text: trust in God, he cares for us, he provides for us.

**W**hat is this trust that Jeremiah and Jesus talk about? Let us look at what Jesus tells us. Is he calling us to a passive trust, promising that God would do things for us? That is the impression one often gets from pious preachers. Jesus says: "Your heavenly Father feeds them (the birds)." How does the Father feed the birds? Have you ever seen God feeding any birds? It is precisely through the hard work of the birds that he feeds them. They go into the fields of their Father, looking for grains, fruits, worms, until they are driven away by other children of the same Father. The Father does not feed them except through what they do for themselves. The lilies of the fields are what they are because every part of the plant

does its job for the whole. Jesus says: "You are more than these" — what is this 'more'? We believe God dwells in us; we believe we are his children, sharers of his life, his creative power, his love-ability and his freedom. We are all brothers and sisters, responsible for each other. Hence what we are asked to do is trust in this indwelling God, in these powers he has given to us, and live up to the possibilities they hold.

Jesus goes on to say: "Seek first his Kingdom and his righteousness" (Mt 6:33) — work for a new social order where there is freedom, love, justice. The Kingdom of God is, no doubt, God's gift, but it not a 'cheap grace' — it is a task as well as gift. The source of the Kingdom is the Father's love, his love as enshrined in our hearts as love-ability, as creativity. Hence this gift is a task for his children. The trust Jesus talks about is not a passive attitude, "leave it all to God, he will do it for you." He is not a paternalistic father who acts in place of his children; he respects their response-ability. This trust becomes a very serious responsibility on our part for ourselves, for our world.

"Thy Kingdom come" — this prayer is our commitment to bring about the Kingdom on earth by not hoarding but sharing bread ("give us today our daily bread"), by mutual forgiveness ("forgive us as we forgive others"), by helping each other to live by the values of the Kingdom ("lead us not into temptation"), by protecting each other and creating structures that help all ("deliver us from evil"). God does care, does give bread and forgiveness — through his children, who are his eyes, hands, heart. It is through the creative power and love-ability he shares with them that he reaches out to all. Hence this trust, instead of leading us to passivity, challenges us to become co-creators of our world, co-creators of a new social order.

The expression 'co-creators' is often misunderstood. Often it is understood as if God does 50% and we do 50%. "I have done my part, now it is for God to do his," we hear. The dependence on God we talk about is not a partial, part-time, for-certain-things, at-certain-times dependence, as our prayer practice often is, but a total dependence at all times and for everything. The presence and action of the divine in the earthly is not like two bulls pulling a cart, but it is a total presence making both God and ourselves hundred per cent agents, the earthly depending on the divine for its very existence. They are not of the same order. Hence this dependence is an attitude, an outlook, an atmosphere in which we take our responsibility for ourselves and for our world seriously.



When Jesus tells us not to be anxious, he is inviting us to be more creative, to use the God-given powers, instead of wasting our energy in anxiety, which is like paying interest on a loan not yet taken. Such anxiety also reveals one's outlook on self: if one identifies oneself with what one *has* and *achieves*, then anxiety is unavoidable. Jesus himself showed us the meaning of trust. He certainly trusted his Father, hence he was very creative, responsible. He gave life, freedom, wholeness, a new future and hope to those who were deprived of these. When people had nothing to eat he did not invite his disciples to pray to the Father, but he ordered them, "You give them to eat"! It is sad that often one hears sermons advocating a type of passive, partial, part-time trust in God, forgetting that we depend on him the whole time, for everything and at the same time we are responsible for our future. We are creators of ourselves and of our world.

A word on the text of Jeremiah quoted earlier: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man!" This is taken out of its context and so is misleading. In chapter 17 Jeremiah talks of the sin of Judah, of its turning away from God and the covenant. This is what Yahweh opposes and 'curses'. But the reading in the Liturgy, without its context is like quoting the Bible to say, "There is no God" (Ps 14:1; 53:1), omitting the introductory words, "The fool says in his heart!"

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## Document

### **Walking Humbly, Acting Justly, Loving Tenderly in Asia**

#### ***A Statement of the Asian Colloquium on the Social Doctrine of the Church***

##### **INTRODUCTION**

We came from different places and from diverse cultures.\* But we came heeding the same call, impelled by the same Spirit of Jesus. We came to participate in the Asian Colloquium on the Social Doctrine of the Church mandated by the Fifth Plenary Assembly of the FABC and organized by its Office of Human Development.

It was our desire to understand more fully in the light of Asia the "good news of Jesus to the poor" (Lk 4:18) availing ourselves of the rich heritage of the social teachings of the Church. Our labor was guided by the desire to serve, following the footsteps of Jesus, our Asian brothers and sisters with whom we journey towards the third millennium.

We shared with one another our common experiences of struggle but also of hope in our commitment to justice and peace. We sought to strengthen one another, so that we may with joy "serve the Asian peoples in the quest for God and for a better human life" (FABC V, Bandung, Indonesia).

##### **CONVICTIONS**

Inspired by the God who hears the cry of His peoples (cf. Ex 3:7), and who has sent his Son anointed by the Spirit "to bring the Good News to the poor" (Lk 4:18)

## **We Recognize that:**

1. The Church is immersed in a continent of great and varied religio-cultural traditions and is only one very small minority at that of the many religio-cultural forces assisting Asia in its struggle for a full life. Asia is where the Church also suffers suspicions, subtle discrimination and lack of freedom in the face of increasing statism and religious fundamentalism. We recognized with compassion the difficulties that our sister churches in several Asian countries are presently suffering.

2. Asia is a continent of massive poverty and exploitation with the levers of power and wealth in the hands of social elites, both within and without, and where the dominant economic system continues to inflict great suffering on the powerless and voiceless poor.

3. Tribal and ethnic minorities, women and children, workers, peasants and fisherfolks specially bear the brunt of poverty and exploitation as evident in agrarian bondage, the tragic effects of tourism, migrant and overseas labor, often working under inhuman conditions.

4. The negative values of cultures joined to negative forces of modernity have inhibited authentic human development. Their positive dimensions and resources have been ignored by the dominant development models.

5. The degradation of the Asian ecology, both human and natural, goes on unabated in the name of development and is moving Asian societies towards a slow and imminent destruction if the process is not reversed.

6. Seeds of authentic development are being sown in parts of Asia. We discern the seeds in the growing social consciousness of poor communities, in the emergence of NGOs and people's organizations, and in the awareness of various faiths and groups to collaborate in the struggle for justice and peace.

## **We Believe that:**

1. The whole purpose of the Church's social ministration is to witness by deeds and words with the power of the Holy Spirit, to the Father's love and the abundance of life given to us in Jesus (cf. Jn 10:10). It is Christ who is the source, centre and summit of our social ministry. It is his love (*agape*) for humanity and for the poor that inspires and requires us to fulfill and surpass the demands of

justice.

2. The situation of dehumanizing poverty and suffering in Asia demands that we underline in our teaching and through our lives as disciples of the Lord his own love of preference for the poor. Persevering in this love, the Church in Asia will become truly a Church of the Poor.

3. Our efforts to promote life in all its forms - human and natural - and to uphold the dignity of every human person, specially the most lowly, are inseparable from a genuine witness to Christ and his message. The social teachings of the Church which draw inspiration from the Gospel serve indispensably today our commitment to fulfill the call of that same Gospel. We have the right and duty to proclaim and put into practice the social teachings of the Church even at the risk of suffering consequences.

4. The Church's social teachings have to interplay dynamically with the cultures of Asia, and be re-read from within these cultures, even as our social teachings can also illumine the realities of Asia.

5. In the context of Asia, inter-religious dialogue and collaboration for authentic and total human development is a key to social transformation and harmony.

6. The universal purpose of created goods, material, intellectual and spiritual, has priority over the relative right to private property which has been understood in a very individualistic and absolutist sense in our present day societies.

7. A global effort is necessary to resolve Asian problems. Hence, the necessity of solidarity among the poor nations as well as the solidarity of the rich nations with them.

8. By reason of their specific call in the Church the lay faithful have the leading role in its mission to be a leaven of social transformation.

In the light of these convictions,

### **We Denounce:**

1. the economic system which through its primacy of money and market constitutes a violent aggression on the rights of the Asian poor to live with human dignity as sons and daughters of God;

2. the political systems and powers which for vested interests compromise the life and the freedom of the Asian poor to grow into

full human persons;

3. the consumerist and materialist culture that gives primacy to anti-Gospel values and looks at persons and the environment as objects of consumption or as mere commodities, thus depersonalizing people and destroying human life and life-support systems;

4. the violation of human rights not only of individuals but also of communities in the name of law and development, of religion and race.

### **We See the Need:**

1. to keep questioning the model of development that pervades the world and has been imposed on our Asian societies, with its damaging effects on our values, traditions and ways of life;

2. to see the unity of human beings with the whole of created reality, the presence in it of God, and the responsibility of human beings to respect, revere and care for the earth;

3. to be in touch with our cultural heritage to discover therein values that are truly human and can serve as basis for alternative models of authentic development;

4. to adhere to Gospel values as the final norm of judging all development models.

### **We are Encouraged:**

1. by the stirrings of the Holy Spirit manifested in the actions of individuals, groups and movements that foster genuine human development, work for justice and promote peace and the integrity of creation;

2. by the growing social consciousness of our youth who long for more than food for themselves and aspire to participate in the building of a better Asian world.

## **COMMITMENTS**

We have listened to the voices of the crucified Lord, resounding in the groanings of our victimized brothers and sisters of Asia. With the joy and hope given to us in his resurrection,

### **We Commit Ourselves:**

1. to be journeying churches moving towards the dawn of God's Kingdom with its abundance of life, love, justice and peace;

2. to proclaim and work for the genuine and integral salvation of the *whole person* and of *all persons*:

3. to put into practice the social teachings of the Church in our personal dealings and in our institutions;

4. to weave into our catechesis and pastoral work the social teachings of the Church;

5. to make, in all humility, these teachings our specific Gospel-contribution to other religious and cultural groups and ideologies in building a more human community, even as we continue to learn and reap with gratitude what God has sown among them;

6. to assist in the formation of the lay faithful to assume a leading role in promoting justice and peace through creative initiatives, specially in the field of education, politics, business, communications and culture;

7. to become a new way of being Church, as in basic ecclesial or human communities, immersed in the lives of the poor and struggling with them in accordance with the Gospel, thus empowering the *anawim* of Asia to become active servant-leaders of the Kingdom of God.

## APPEALS

1. Expressing our collective gratitude for the series of documents on the social doctrine of the Church, particularly *Centesimus Annus*, we nevertheless appeal to the Holy See that in the preparation of these documents the relevant Asian realities be more considered. In this way the social doctrine of the Church could be acknowledged and accepted as meaningful among Asian Christians and peoples of other faiths.

2. We appeal to our sister churches in highly developed countries to bring pressure upon their governments and other decision-making institutions to desist from economic policies that violate the dignity and basic rights of the Asian poor and perpetuate their deprived condition. In a special way, we ask the Episcopal Conferences of these countries to exert their moral authority in this regard. We ask the bishops in our own countries to do the same in relation to the powers that be.

3. It is becoming increasingly clear that education is a powerful means of bringing about social change. The Church in Asia has a huge potential in the form of large numbers of schools and colleges. We appeal to educators that deep social consciousness and truly

human values be inculcated in students at every level. They should be trained in solidarity, cooperation, care for the earth, respect for human dignity, generosity and dedication. While maintaining excellence, this should not mean catering only to the elite, but raising the standard of the disadvantaged classes. The same values should be inculcated in our out of school youth. Technical education and respect for work should be specially fostered. Adult education, non-formal education including conscientization of the people leading to humanizing process is an urgent need to promote their dignity and rights.

4. We earnestly appeal to those in-charge of the formation of the laity, priests, seminarians and religious to make the social teachings of the Church an essential part of their educational and training programs. It is not so much a question of instruction in abstract principles as initiating them to discover the relevance of the Gospel to the concrete problems of life.

5. We urge our Christian communities as a matter of duty to strive for the improvement of working conditions and defend the peasants, fisherfolk and migrant workers from every form of exploitation. Church institutions should be the first in giving an example of just treatment of their workers.

6. We appeal also to all governments to respect the human rights and promote the dignity of every human being and group, and to respond to our peoples aspirations for equality and participation in public life.

## CONCLUSION

We conclude this Statement with the confident prayer that the same Holy Spirit who guided us through these days will continue to give discernment to our minds, love to our hearts and courage to our deeds.

In a renewed proclamation of the Good News, it is the witness of deeds that matters most to our peoples of Asia, whom we serve and with whom we journey towards the Kingdom, which deep in our hearts we all aspire for. May God's Kingdom come! May we reveal its presence in the midst of our peoples!

May Mary, the first disciple of the Lord, who sang the great deeds of God in raising up the lowly (cf. Lk 1:48-53) accompany us in our journey of service to the peoples of Asia.

# Book Reviews

## Bible

**Interpreting The New Testament.** An Introduction to the Principles and Methods of New Testament Exegesis. By H. CONZELMANN and A. LINDEMANN, Peabody: H.Hendrickson Publishers, 1988. Pp. xix-389, ISBN 0-913573-80-9

The title of the original German book is *Arbeitsbuch zum Neuen Testament*. This is the translation of the 8th revised edition 1988. The English title is deceptive because Workbook ought to be explicitly mentioned since this is essential a book to enable serious students to learn and progress in the skill of exegesis according to the Historical Critical method (HCM). Therefore as we read we are exposed to a mass of explanation and information, specific exercises, examples, questions and reading tasks which are all essential parts of the book which has become a classic in the German speaking world. This is a handbook.

Aware of the malaise in the critical study of the NT since exegesis is seen as too specialized and the results too hypothetical leading to general uncertainty, the authors wish to provide first of all information, guidance and personal practice in using the HCM so that students are able to both exegete passages and critically judge the work of others. A knowledge of Greek is presume and needed to profit fully from the book. Besides an initiation into method the authors provide the type of information needed to situate Jesus, Paul and NT writers and writings into their contemporary world. Because Jesus is the central person in all the NT texts a separate section describes the studies made of the historical Jesus' teaching and personal self-consciousness.

The student also needs information about each writing and so a summary of

scholarly study of each book is given. (Note the typical sub-sections on the Gospel of Matthew: 1. Problem and Structure; 2. Sources; 3. Language and its Peculiarities; 4. Authorship; 5. Basic Theological Ideas). Therefore by moving back and forth in the book the student can use it as a pedagogic handbook.

There is a great amount of information given in a precise and clear manner with guidance for further basic reading in English. Working through various portions the student learns, as an apprentice, through practice. The book could supplement lectures.

The handbook has the strengths and weaknesses of the HCM and its length. The rich variety of methods with which the HCM must be supplemented to do hermeneutics is missing. The attempt to give so much information means that statements and opinions need qualifications. I found the dependence on HCM to study Jesus of Nazareth quite inadequate in places, especially in the section on his consciousness which is too negative, hypothetical and uncertain. The authors say of methodology: "Questions of methodology must in no sense be regarded as questions of world views...." However, each methodology is built upon definite presuppositions of which we need to be aware.

Any NT student who wishes to learn to do serious exegesis and hermeneutics will not find a comparable handbook in English, as far as I know, to learn the HCM. There are aspects of "Introduction" which Kuemmel's classic introduction will supplement and this book adds a distinctive and valuable dimension to other types of introductions. We would hope to find it in good theological libraries.

**Paddy MEAGHER**



**Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation.** By Peter COTTERELL and Max TURNER. London, SPCK, 1989. Pp.348. £ 9.95. ISBN 0-281-04358-2

A number of times I picked this book up and seeing "Linguistics" put it down fearing its content. I associated linguistics with the scientific study of language involving many technical terms and something of the esoteric. Having never given time to the study of modern linguistics I shied away from this book. Later I read I.H. Marshall's commendation on the back cover, perused the table of contents and plunged in, beginning not with Chapter One, Language, Linguistic and Biblical Interpretation, but The Use and Abuse of Word Studies in Theology (ch 4) and looked ahead each day to the chance to work through the book.

The two Chapters on Words (The Grammar of Words: Lexical Semantics, ch.5 and ch.4 above) made me aware how often in writing and lecturing I and others sin by confusing word and concept, neglecting the domain (context) in which words alone have their full meaning (though a word also carries meaning), giving undue weight to etymology and not being aware and careful when choosing or describing the denotative sense of a word. Reading these chapters we see the value of Barr's *The Semantics of Biblical Language*. The discussion of the sense of *kephale* in Col 2:19 (head/source) is instructive and illustrates well the need to be careful (pp.141-145). Discussing sense the authors distinguish between lexical sense, concept and discourse concept (word in actual context of usage) and apply this to Paul's use of Son of God (Gal 4:4-6). What elements are essential to the lexical, to concept sense and what to the discourse sense will differ because of the usage in diverse contexts.

The opening chapter describes in a simplified way the nature of language and linguistics, clarifying many of the technical terms used in the study. The link between linguistics and exegesis and its value for a study of the Bible are emphasized.

The following two chapters speci-

cally deal with meaning. First of all they describe author's and receptor's meanings and the textual meaning and reflect on the problems related to the author meaning. They conclude with a description of the discourse meaning which is the goal of exegesis: "...that meaning, which can be arrived by competent judges with sufficiently extensive knowledge of the *linguistic context*, the *discourse context* (the contribution of all the other parts of the text to that part under immediate consideration) and the *situational context* shared by the writer and his intended readers" (p.72). This is followed by a lengthy study of meaning itself—as sense (sentence, paragraphs...); meaning and reference ("the referent of a word or expression in an utterance is the *thing in the world which is intentionally signified by that word or expression*" p. 84); as significance and the needed pre-supposition pools (what is needed by the receiver to understand); meaning related to genre and finally related to the exegetical task.

Building on these chapters the authors study the sense of words (discussed above), sentences, sentence clusters (interesting) and discourse (narrative, instruction and conversation). They indicate the methods of careful analytical study so as to become more and more aware of how author-text communicate meaning. Though no exegete-student will use all the details of analysis yet there is so much which makes the student sensitive to the text in all its varied interrelated details at various level of interrelatedness. The methods of analysis are illustrated with biblical texts (e.g., Heb 2:1-2; Gen 28; Jn 3; Rom 12:20; 1 Cor 11:2-16...). A separate chapter is devoted to Non-literal Language (metaphor, parable, allegory, imagery).

I have found the book stimulating and would recommend it highly for M.Th. students and teachers and highly motivated B.Th. students who wish to be able themselves to work on texts. This is a real handbook for the exegetical stage of interpretation.

Paddy MEAGHER

**What is Narrative Criticism.** By Mark Allan POWELL. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990. Pp.xi-125. \$ 9.95. ISBN 08006-0473-3

The book belongs to the series *Guides to Biblical Scholarship*. Along with the volume *Rhetoric and the New Testament* (B. L. Mack, 1990) the reader is introduced to more recent methods for the study of the NT originating in literary criticism. Methods of study deal with either the author, the text or the reader. Narrative criticism is concerned with the reader (implied reader) in the text which is fashioned by the implied author. To this extent it is a form of reader response criticism. However the focus of attention is upon the narrative/story quality of the text and its poetic function, namely its power as story to affect the implied reader.

The strength of the method is this concentration on the final form of the text, its writing, its relative autonomy and its narrative character and so its transformative potentialities for today.

The initial chapters on *Scripture as Story* and *Ways of Reading* survey and compare various historical and literary critical approaches. Narrative criticism (NC) is concerned with the story (events, characters and settings [temporal, spatial and social]) and how the story is told (discourse). Under the latter heading Powell describes the use of symbol, irony and narrative patterns. The concern is: "How does the implied author guide the implied reader in understanding the story?" (23). A chapter is given to events, characters and settings with an illustration from one of the Gospels (Event: Matthew's plot; Characters: Leaders in each Gospel; Settings: Mark's use).

The final chapter is an honest assessment of the contribution and limitations of this method. The emphasis given to the text and its evocative character and potential to transform are positive assets. In comparing this method with the more traditional historico-critical approaches Powell states: "Very little attention, however, has been paid to the interpretative

processes through which these texts are appropriated in the present. Narrative criticism attempts to fill this gap in biblical studies by examining the ways in which texts become meaningful to readers. The use of this method is hermeneutically significant for the church in that it enables scholars to complete the task of interpretation in a way that does not limit revelation to events that happened in the past" (p.99).

However, he acknowledges the importance of the historical concern for faith, the place of the study of the referential meaning of texts and the way NC can serve theology. It enables us to find the significance of the meaning of the Gospel stories. However it leaves us with four stories about Jesus which need to be synthesized.

The method is unable really to integrate adequately the discourses of Matthew and Luke into the study of the story. I do not agree that the Cross is the climax of Matthew's story and aspects of the study of settings in Mark are not greatly helpful. A very useful introduction to the method with a valuable appendix on "Using NC in Exegesis".

**Paddy MEAGHER**

**Who Knows What Is God? A commentary on the Books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.** By Kathleen FARMER. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1991. Pp. 220. \$ 15.95. ISBN 0-8028-0161-7.

The special thing about the International Theological Commentary, of which the above is one volume, is that it incorporates not just Jewish and Christian insights, but also tries to read the signs of the times, and make the Bible message relevant to current situations, even and especially in Third World countries, from which area come many of its contributors.

The present volume is a refreshing and challenging insightful study of two important books of the Bible. The first - Proverbs - is comparatively easy to tackle. The second - Ecclesiastes - has proved a stumbling block to most com-

mentators. The question that forms the title is from that book and already poses the problem.

Dr Farmer is not only an eminent scripture scholar, she is also an excellent communicator — a not too frequent combination. Noticing the differences between the literary conventions of Israel and our own, she shows that the two books with which she deals are complementary rather than contrasting as most superficial students might presume. Being an intelligent, aware woman, she is also concerned about the feminist angle. She notes that one section of Proverbs (ch. 31) is attributed to a woman (the mother of King Lemuel of Massa). The section contains a description of a strong, intelligent leader type woman (31:19-31). This passage is used, of course, in the *Mass* of a married woman saint.

Dr Farmer also notes the lovely (female) personification of Wisdom in ch. 8, though she cannot refrain from mentioning the unpleasant reference to woman as temptress in ch. 7. She shows, however, that many of the unpleasant references to women are due rather to the patriarchal attitudes of translators than to the intentions of the original authors.

She begins her commentary by showing that the meaning of the word '*mashal*' which we translate as 'proverb', is much wider than the English term. Then she discusses the recipient audience, the potential reader(s). Though parts of the book seem to be addressed to an individual, the phrase 'my son' could refer to pupils.

The 'Words of the Wise' contain many gems. The first victims of violence are the violent themselves (1:18). Both wisdom and temptation are personified. To have wisdom you must be humble (3:7). Wickedness is not only all pervasive, it is also addictive. The antidote - wisdom. The author (of Proverbs) is not ecumenical. He/she warns her readers against the seductions of foreign nations (not foreign women, points out Dr Farmer). The normal moral teachings are advocated not as an imposed law, but for

self-interest. You can not walk on red hot coals without burning your feet.

After the 'Instructions' (Prov 1-5) Dr Farmer deals with the Solomonic Sayings (chs. 10-22 and 35). Unlike the early rather personalised instructions these tend to be impersonal generalizations. Because of the variety of themes and style it is not easy to summarise or even speak generally about them. There is poetry moralizing, simple proverbs (in the English sense of the word) even humour and recommendations on personal probity and social justice.

One expected and hoped for much on the difficult puzzling book Ecclesiastes. Is it piety or heresy? Is it theology or philosophy, or just the cynical reflection of a fading '*bon viveur*'? Was it included in the Bible by mistake? Dr Farmer begins by examining the word 'vanity' which occurs so frequently in the book. She concludes that it may properly be translated as 'breath-like,' insubstantial.

Is Solomon the author? Considering internal evidence she doubts it. The book was probably written four centuries after Solomon. The tensions and contradictions in the text are considered but not by any means satisfactorily explained. It is as though Qoheleth, the author, allows the audience to overhear his reflective meditations.

Dr Farmer finds a consistency in the book which indicates that if not the work of one author it is due to a group of harmoniously thinking and working authors. She insists that the famous cynicism is related not to God's but to human activity. What of permanence is left of many activities - unhelped by God? They are all vanity, breath-like. There is no satisfaction in wealth, pleasure, work, wisdom. Then what? Despair? But even despair is vanity, breath-like, it doesn't endure. Then what - Enjoy yourself. Only what God does, endures (3:4). Avoid worry — especially about money. He who has money never has enough. Therefore fear God. Better a good name than wealth, better patience than pride. Wisdom and knowledge too have their limitations.

And so on with the doubts, the cynicism, the questions. This precisely is the purpose of Qoheleth. After the assured moralizing of Proverbs, Qoheleth makes you think.

This is an appendix on Qoheleth and the Afterlife. Qoheleth, concludes the author, "does not deny the possibility that God's judgment might take place somewhere outside of human experience."

This is an interesting, well-written book. But the questions about Ecclesiastes remain unanswered.

R.H. LESSER

**The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians.** By Leon MORRIS (revised edition), Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1991. Pp.xvi-278. \$ 27.95. ISBN 0-8028-2168-5.

**Commentary of 1 and 2 Thessalonians.** A Commentary on the Greek Text. By Charles A. WANAMAKER, (Eerdmans), 1990. Pp. xxviii-316. ISBN 0-8028-2394-7.

These commentaries written according to the normal classical model for commentaries belong to the NICNT (Morris) and NIGTC series and each fulfills the aims of their respective series.

Morris's commentary is a revised edition of his 1959 work. He has not changed in any major way his judgments about the letters nor his exegesis of the text. He has nuanced points and incorporated discussions with recent authors. He has taken into account later major studies and especially some studies of early Christianity of a sociological character. Malherbe's study *Paul and the Thessalonians* (VJTR, 54 [1990] 358) has been taken into account but not Meeks's nor Theissen's sociological studies. Among many modern commentaries and monographs account has been taken of Bruce, Jewett, Best, Marshall, Moore, Ward... The discussion with recent authors is found in the footnotes and adds value to an already good commentary. In the original edition and in this little attention is paid to Rigaux's classical commentary.

The commentary is competent and clear with exegetical decisions well argued. The major discussion is with Frame, Lightfoot, Moffatt and Findlay. So students keen to know the history of English exegetical study will find it well presented by Morris. He has wisely used the NIV translation in this edition. He could have dismissed the post-Reformation identification of the Man of Sin with the Papacy. He only says: "But it is difficult to think of a line of popes as constituting the Man of Lawlessness, for it seems rather to be an individual." Such a comment ought not be found in a commentary which the editor calls "thoroughly up-to-date and reliable" (p.ix). Apart from this point the judgment can stand though I would not agree with some exegetical decisions.

Wanamaker's work can be numbered among the major contemporary commentaries. He carries on a continued discussion with major authors including Malherbe, Meeks, Theissen, Hock, Holmberg, Gager (sociological studies of Paul), Stowers, Funk, Doty, O'Brien, Kennedy, Jewett (literary / rhetorical studies) and commentators in English and European languages (Frame, Best, Bruce, Marshall, Morris... Holtz, von Dobschuetz, Dibelius, Friedrich, Rigaux, Masson) and authors of specialized articles and monographs (Trilling, Aus, Giblin, Lyons, Collins, Mears, Plevnik, Schmithals...).

There are two aspects of this commentary which deserve mention. First the author pays attention to the rhetorical character of the letter. He finds the literary genre approach and a thematic approach inadequate to describe their literary nature and structure. Therefore he analyses their structure and also the literary purpose using classical rhetorical models (cf Kennedy's work). He disagrees especially with Stowers at this point. Betz has done this for Galatians and 2 Corinthians chs 8-9. He finds the demonstrative/epideictic pattern apt for 1 Thess and the deliberative pattern for 2 Thess. In the light of this analysis he proposes rhetorical patterns for both letters.

My initial reaction to such proposals is sceptical since you need to push and shove the text to fit into the classical categories. However, I did not find the suggested structures and descriptions of the parts in terms of exordium, narratio, digressio, probatio.... intrusive upon nor determinative of the interpretation as I do with Betz's Galatians.

The second aspect is Wanamaker's judgement—well argued—that 2 Thess was written before 1 Thess and taken by Timothy to the Church on his visit (1 Thess 3:1.6). This is a minority opinion and I do not judge that the arguments are conclusive or convincing. However, it is suggestive. The author, like Morris, argues strongly for the authenticity of 2 Thess and debates this point, in the introduction and in the commentary, especially with Trilling (pp.17-28). Though there is some room for doubt he judges that none of the arguments against authenticity nor the cumulative effect of the arguments are conclusive. I would agree.

The commentary itself follows the usual format, is historico-critical in orientation, exegetes the Greek text and is very detailed and informative. Wanamaker presents carefully the opinions of other authors and argues for his own exegesis with arguments drawn from the Greek text, Paul's letters and thinking, the sociological background and the situation in the Church as far as we can discover it. He is thorough. I thought that his hypothesis about the order of the letters would colour his exegetical judgments. Though he returns to this point often and indicates how his interpretation supports the hypothesis, yet the hypothesis does not determine the interpretation and so lead to careless exegesis.

I found his explanation of the problem behind 4:13-20 (the problem about assumption with Christ and not resurrection as such) and the treatment of 2 Thess 1:2 well done. He correctly judges that Paul addresses the problem of men's sexual mastery in 4:3-6 and handles the difficult, apparently anti-semitic, text of 1 Thess 2:14-16 with insight as he empha-

sizes the concrete situation and literary type. The same can be said of the interpretation of 2 Th 1:5-10.

This commentary ought to find a place in all good libraries.

**Paddy MEAGHER**

## Mission

**The San Antonio Report.** Your will be done. Mission in Christ's Way. Edited by Frederick R. WILSON. Geneva: WCC Publications, 1990. Pp. 200. \$ 14.95.

This book summarises what happened at the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism held by the World Council of Churches on the campus of Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas, USA, in May, 1989. The idea was to get together, to consult, to inquire, to inspire each other and to assist the Christian Community in the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ by word and deed.

The two most significant trends of the Conference were "the spirit of universality (catholicity) of the gathering, and its concern for the fullness of the Gospel, namely, "to hold in creative tension spiritual and material needs, prayer and action, evangelism and social responsibility, dialogue and witness, power and vulnerability, local and universal."

Ultimately the Conference aimed to bear witness:

- to those who hear or experience a twisted or partial gospel, or no gospel at all: mission in Christ's way calls us by deed and word to share the wholeness of the Gospel, the love of God revealed in the incarnate Word, Jesus, Christ;

- to Churches and nations where divisions, barriers and enmities prevail: mission in Christ's way calls us to strive for unity with justice as a basis for effective mission;

- to peoples of wonderfully diverse cultures across the earth: Mission in Christ's way calls us to extend understanding and respect, relating the Gospel of Christ to these cultures with sensitivity;

- to persons of other religious faiths in the world: mission in Christ's way calls us to listen to and respect their beliefs, witness our faith to them in word and deed, seek with them for peace and justice;

- to young people and all those resisting injustice and war, facing repression and death: mission in Christ's way calls us to solidarity in the struggle for life, turning hopelessness into strength...

In the first section the theology of mission is spelt out. Also elaborated is witness in a secular society and among people of other living faiths with whom we must have dialogue. In all, communication of the Gospel power must be subordinated to love. This will include participation in the suffering and struggle of those in that plight.

Witnesses were heard from Palestine — the *intifada* as an authentic manifestation of creative power, Namibia and its relationship to apartheid; indigenous people (they seem to mean what we call aboriginals); Lebanon where mission means integrating communities. The rather negative role of the U.S.A. in developing countries was stressed.

The third section dealt with the earth, from a Christian viewpoint — though rather with a just sharing of the earth among people than a proper care for the earth.

The different addresses are included. The Conference Moderator, Bishop Anastasios of Androussa spoke of the new idols, warning especially against pride. Positively he stressed the Trinitarian factor in Mission. Emilio Castro, General Secretary of the WCC, stressed the necessity of discerning and conforming to the will of God.

All in all this seems to have been a very stimulating, encouraging and enlightening conference.

One notices in the list of participants not a few Roman Catholics, either as observers, accredited visitors or in the case of one Archbishop and our own former editor, Fr Dupuis, as consultants.

R.H. LESSER

**Healing Community.** By Karin GRANBERG MICHAELSON. Geneva: WCC, 1991. Pp. xii-99. \$ 7.95. ISBN 2-8254-1039-X.

The author's concern is that the believing communities of Christians, be they small local communities or even larger ones be intentionally and structurally communities whose goal and way of life are continued sources of wholeness to their members and the larger human community. A very major aspect of their life will be to effect, promote and nourish the healing of the human person and community from different perspectives and at different levels. She sees this as a definite and necessary challenge to the churches. She is aware that many communities of believers often not only do not perform this role but create obstacles to healing and avoid or exclude the sick of modern society.

She develops the biblical basis, recounts the history of one such community of which she was a member and its disintegration. This leads her to reflect upon the elements which are needed in the continued process of building and being healing communities which are able to handle diverse conflicts, be realistic and understand the processes involved in building the community ever anew. Such communities must be rooted in love to be healing communities and perform various works of healing which are needed today. I remember a person who worked in L'Arche for a few years speaking about the great need for healing among the staff more than among the mentally disabled. This is a valuable book to set the reader reflecting. Members of hospital communities, religious communities... could read it with profit.

Paddy MEAGHER

**The Isaiah Vision. An Ecumenical Strategy for Congregational Evangelism.** By Raymond FUNG. Geneva: WCC, 1992. Pp. ix-95. ISBN 2-8254-1037-3.

The goal of the evangelism described in the booklet from the *Risk Series* is twofold: to collectively witness to Jesus Christ in order to attract others to

him and to discipleship and as Christians to work together with others for the transformation of our society. The transformation is spelt out symbolically in terms of the Isaiah Agenda—that children do not die—that old people live in dignity—that those who build houses live in them—and that those who plant vineyards eat the fruit.

The local congregation invites all who engage in this programme of social transformation to share their worship and when judged apt to consider the claims of Christ on their lives.

The book explains the Agenda, namely social transformation, and reflects on the problems of worship shared by men and women of different beliefs and the ways of inviting others to explicit discipleship. It also reflects on many aspects of the work for social transformation—as sharing in God's work, as sharing with others as partners and more importantly as sharing in solidarity with others. This is described in terms of sharing in the woundedness and joy of others, their struggles, uncertainties, fears... in a context of commitment to social transformation.

An important aspect throughout is the congregational nature of the involvement. Therefore the author develops a theology of The People of God and the diversity of gifts given so that all may be at the service of the human community, building this community in diverse ways. Some will find this too evangelical while others would want more attention to the transformation of socio-economic and political structures. The book will inspire and challenge Christians to more authentic community life, rooted in the service of the world and the desire to share the gift of Jesus Christ.

**Paddy MEAGHER**

**An Introduction to Asian Theology. An Asian Story from a Malaysian Eye for Asian Neighbourology.** By Dr S. BATU-MALAL. Delhi: ISPCK, 1991. Pp. xii+457. Rs. 45. ISBN 81-7214-015-0.

This is a remarkable book of intro-

duction to the Christian theologies of eleven Asian countries: Korea, Taiwan, Japan, Philippines, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, Burma, Vietnam and Malaysia. Each of these countries is systematically dealt with, its 'Texts', that is, Scriptures, and the 'context', that is, the historical, social, political, economic, religious and cultural aspects, and the sought Christian response to them. Everything, event or situation, which concerns humanity is taken as the raw material for theology because God in Jesus Christ has made human history his own.

The aims of the book are: (1) to initiate and enable a student of theology to study Asian theology; (2) to know the Asian situation so that we love it: "to know Asians is to love Asians"; (3) to make the Asian journey a neighbourological journey so that neighbours are taken seriously and respectfully; and (4) doxological and missiological, so that the best is offered to God and to our fellow men and women.

In the first chapter, the author has shown the boundaries, characteristics, contexts, contents, possibilities, assumptions and methodologies of Christian theology in Asia. He shows its need and urgency for the developing countries in their multi-religious, cultural, social and political situations. The Church in this context has to communicate a life-giving power and the freedom of the risen Christ. Batumalai also examines early history, the missionary era, the prophetic witness and the twentieth century traditions of people which form the particular context and content of their theological endeavour. Each country has something special and beautiful to contribute to the theological 'shrines' from where 'pilgrims' could draw inspiration, orientation and spiritual strength.

Indian Christian theology has rightly received comparatively more pages. The elaborate selected bibliography after each chapter will prove valuable for the readers to go deeper into the related areas of theological concerns. Each chapter also proposes some specific concerns for each country relevant for the

people. Ten theological theses proposed by Dr C. S. Song and the concluding poems of Miss Shameela Jameel from Pakistan attract the reader's attention.

Asian theology is a 'living theology' of people who are poor, oppressed, voiceless and marginalized. The book presents a fairly comprehensive outline of the theological thinking of each country. I hope and wish that in the second part, which is his next book, the author will enrich us further with theological insights and challenges.

Albert KULLU, S.J

**Church Truly Alive. Journey to the Filipino Revolution.** By James H. KROEGER, M.M. Davao City, Philippines: Mission Studies Institute, 1988. Pp. 68, Rs.20.

The Philippines is the only Asian country that is predominantly Christian. 94% of its inhabitants are Christian and 84% are Catholic. But how Catholic, how Christian is it? We know from the sad story of South America that large numbers do not necessarily mean much Christianity. Immediately after the Second Vatican Council the Filipino Church vigorously began implementing the Council's pastoral/theological thrusts. This book is the story of its achievement in 20 years - from 1965-1985.

Church leaders started theologising on the signs of the times. Soon the Church found itself immersed in social action - improving farming and development projects. Then the realisation came that the Church must take a stand for justice, and therefore get involved to some extent in politics. Especially as this period coincided with the rise of the Marcoses and attendant luxury and corruption, there would eventually have to be a clash.

Evangelization became for the Filipino Church an awareness of, respect for and need to protect the dignity of the human person, whoever and wherever he may be - Christian, Muslim, squatter, striker, landless . . . . "This is EVANGELIZATION, the proclamation, above all, of

SALVATION from sin; the liberation from everything oppressive to man; the DEVELOPMENT of man in all his dimensions, personal and communitarian; and ultimately the renewal of society in all its strata through the interplay of the Gospel Truths and man's concrete total life. THIS IS OUR TASK: THIS IS OUR MISSION." (An extract from the bishops' pastoral letter in 1977).

With such a programme, because of its numbers and influence, the Church could not fail to have an impact on society and the Government. With a government like that of Ferdinand Marcos, this inevitably invited reprisals: "Arrests, imprisonment, charges of 'subversion', deportation or murder of missionaries and religious are all signs of vitality for a Church whose self-understanding is that of an *ecclesia martyrum*."

The very suffering of the Church and many of its leaders, gave it a moral authority over the people and enabled it to play a leading role in the silent, bloodless revolution that finally toppled Marcos. All this is spelt out in this small but important book.

R.H. LESSER

**Sunset in the East? Asian Challenges and Christian Involvement.** By Felix WILFRED, Chair in Christianity, University of Madras, 1991. Pp. viii-358. (No price marked. For copies: Amal C. Dev, St Paul's Seminary, P.B. 36, Tiruchirappally 620001, T.N.)

The collection of articles reflects on how Christianity can respond to various challenges of our continent in dialogue and collaboration with believers of other religious traditions and with secular ideologies. The introduction situates the book in today's Asia with its massive poverty, misery and religious pluralism on the one hand, and on the other, various signs of hope for the vast continent. This attempt to respond to the Asia of today demands that the Church rethink itself in the context of religious pluralism and the sufferings and conflicts of the



people. The book has three parts, each with six chapters: (1) Challenges, (2) Inculturation and Dialogue, (3) Local Churches and their Involvement.

Part I studies the emerging trends and socio-cultural processes happening in Asia; the question of human rights and the Mandal movement; Asian tourism; the debt trap; option for the poor and of the poor and finally ecology from an Asian perspective. These chapters show that human rights have to be approached through the option for the poor; mass tourism involves antihuman elements; the debt trap involves contradictions, namely how in the name of helping the poor the first world and the elites of the third world become richer; the condition of the dalits (the 'untouchables') in India calls the Church to opt for the poor and to join in the option of the poor, namely, for self-emanicipation and liberation; the liberative potential of popular religiosity needs to be tapped, and finally, the ecological concern is really a matter of social justice and our involvement must be from moral and ethical convictions. A sign of hope is that those at the periphery of the Church and other religions and small groups are making a true option for the poor; an encounter among various religious and ideological peripheries is taking place in Asia today.

In Part II the basic question is the place of Christianity in a pluralistic world. Inculturation is described as a *way of being* of the Church, brought about by the community of believers, living in a particular socio-cultural milieu. Western Christianity is asked to be open to the interpretations coming from the Asian peoples without making its own rich and old tradition the only interpretation of the Gospel and to awaken its own forgotten traditions like the mystical and contemplative dimensions. Dogmas need to be re-interpreted in the background of the Asian world-view, which would lead to a true unity in plurality through communion, mutual knowledge and dialogue. Asian theology ought to take seriously the popular religiosity

which provides a great potential for contextual theologizing. In spite of all appearances, the author argues, dialogue is gasping for breath and hence the horizons of dialogue need to be widened; religions have to meet at the arena of Asian socio-political realities.

Part III argues for a culturally founded ecclesiology appropriating the essence of the Church in terms of Asian cultures, ways of life, interhuman relationships and communitarian existence. The suggestion to see the Church as present beyond the boundaries of the Christian institutional religion or the 'larger Jesus community' is welcome, but is it different from the long discarded 'anonymous christianity'? The opposition to a 'minority complex' too is fine, but it should be seen in the context of North India where local Christians cannot easily get a job in government or other public or private sectors just because they are Christians and are of the so-called 'low castes'. The exercise of power in the Church is an area where she has failed more than in any other; this power is not to be the dominating type but that which 'draws', inspires as Jesus said in Jn 12:32: I will draw all to myself from the powerlessness of the cross, the "cross on which today hang the powerless Asian brothers and sisters" (p. 287). Two chapters present the FABC, its orientation, challenges and impact; the author draws a very hopeful future for the Church in Asia. The final chapter is a reflection on Episcopal Conferences, quite an informative study, showing their importance, limitations and dangers; though I wonder if the approach is not too juridical and not sufficiently based on 'how does this institution help the Church to carry out its mission in a region or country'.

The themes discussed are very important and vital and the Church in Asia needs to be aware of them; they are handled with competence and erudition. As the articles were written for various situations and meetings, there is a certain amount of repetition. Though addressing the issues of Asia, the insights and the

approach are of value for anyone interested in the question of the Church's response to the actual challenges of our day. Or is the author suggesting that the Church will not be able to respond to the challenges of today's Asia. The reason of the title is not clear to me. Just a flight of fancy? But in fact he seems to suggest that she is. Hence what does the title mean?

J. MATTAM, S.J.

## Book Notices

**Mother Teresa: The Glorious Years.** By Edward LE JOLY, S.J. Bandra: St Paul Publications, 1992. Pp. 159. Rs 30. ISBN 81-7109-146-6.

This book chronicles Mother Teresa's life from 1985 to the 1990 Chapter and the attitudes, plans and works which reach back over years of her apostolic life. There is emphasis given to the plan to open 25 houses each year in the 80s. The book is not a history but a simple, reverent, unevaluative chronicle and pietistic study of this great Christian woman and the work of her congregation. There are chapters on the Pope's visit to Calcutta, the Assisi prayer for peace meeting, Aids, foundations in Eastern European countries, finances, her personality and health, the growth of the congregation, her involvement in the international life of the Church... Many will be moved and led to thank God for this woman of faith and love and intense devotion to Jesus Christ in the poor of our world.

**The Prayer Called Life.** By George KATHOLIL SSP. Bandra: St Paul Publications, 1991. Pp. 119. Rs 15. ISBN 81-7109-147-4.

The insistent emphasis in this good reflection on prayer is the way our whole life can become and be prayer. There is a consistent concern to enable readers to change their attitudes to prayer from saying prayers at specific times and using specific formula and cultic forms to see prayer as a dimension of all aspects of our lives. Nothing need to be excluded from prayer—our whole selves, our feel-

ings, our bodies, our daily work, play, concerns, sins, tensions, struggles... and all can enrich and nourish our prayer. Good stories are used and various aspects of prayer are systematically treated and quotations from great teachers of the spiritual life are given.

Readers will surely find insights and inspiration and the book can be recommended strongly to lay people to broaden their understanding of prayer and see that there is so much prayer in their lives, actually or potentially.

**Twelve Pathways to Feeling Better About Yourself.** By Dr Dov Peretz ELKINS. Bandra: Better Yourself Books, 1991. Pp. 68. Rs 12. ISBN 81-7108-145-2.

Anyone familiar with good modern movements intent to foster healthy human growth will see their influence in this brief book. It is a workbook really—to be read slowly, often, over periods of time and annotated and worked upon. There are six short sections on growth where the focus is upon attitudinal change and growth (mind and heart): Know/ Respect/ Love/ Affirm/ Trust/ Accept Yourself. The other six sections are action oriented: Show/ Stretch/ Nourish/ Be/ Share/ Transcend Yourself. There are exercises to do with blank spaces in the book itself and some excellent line drawings to drive home the major points. A simple and potentially powerful booklet.

**Which Way India ? A Pocket Guide to the Future.** By MORAL RE-ARMAMENT MOVEMENT. Bandra: Better Yourself Books, 1991. Pp. 62. Rs 12. ISBN 81-7108-165-7.

Using cartoons the authors have attempted to convey to readers the ways they can assure that India becomes a more humane and just society. The focus is upon inner conversion and its structural expressions in daily life in society. The booklet reflects the ideals of the Movement. This could be useful in classroom work, discussion groups and youth groups. The cartoons are good.

**Indira Gandhi: Letters to a Personal Friend.** By T.D. TANDON. Bandra: Better Yourself Books, 1991. Pp. 74. Rs 18. ISBN 81-7108-166-5.

The author has been associated with the Freedom Struggle, UP political life, the Nehru family and journalism most of his life. He published a book *Indira Gandhi—Lingering Echoes* in 1990. This collection of letters, brief and not very significant except to the author personally (the letters are usually short and cautious) does give us a glimpse of the personality of Indira Gandhi and the author's association with her. Brief introductory notes situate each letter, normally responses to Tandon's letters to her.

#### Paddy MEAGHER

**Girls Talk/Boys Talk/Parents Listen** By Lucienne PICKERING. Bandra: St Paul Publications, 1992. Pp. 107/ 118/ 115. Rs 22 each. ISBN 81-7108-170-3/ 171-1/ 172-X.

These are three excellent books about the human and psycho-sexual development of girls and boys and the role of parents in this fascinating, confusing and necessary part of human life.

Addressing parents Pickering—mother of five grown children and youth counsellor—emphasizes the needed knowledge and skills of communication, the parents' educative and accompanying role, the pitfalls and the fears of some parents. There is much wisdom in this book.

The books for 12 to 16 year old girls and boys are similar in content and basic diagrams and particular in tracing the psycho-sexual and human development of each. Both books are written in a very appealing style with an interplay between a type of life like story—a diary in *Girls Talk*—and plenty of gradual, sound and clear information morally acceptable to all.

I would recommend the book very highly for families so that boys and girls with their parents can read all three books and they can discuss and learn together. They could be used in the class

be in school libraries—a few copies. However, the best place for their use is the family. They are very attractively produced and reasonably priced. Could a Hindi edition be prepared?

#### Paddy MEAGHER

**Joy of Committed Love—Handbook for Husbands/— Handbook for Wives.** By Gary SMALLEY. Bandra: ST Paul Publications (Better Yourself Books), 1991. Pp. 129/ 141. Rs 25 each. ISBN 81-7108-142-8/ 143-6.

As so often with *Better Yourself Books*, the covers catch our attention. These twin handbooks aim to help couples ensure that their marriage is a continued process of human growth through mutual help, that their married lives mature and that they are able to prevent and overcome crises.

The impression I received from reading parts of both books was that both seem to concentrate more on women's need—advise to men how to respond in a healthy way to women for women's sake and advise to women how to act, so that their husbands will respond to them.

The books have plenty of information, exercises, accounts of personal experience, many basic principles and guidelines, insights into the specific nature and needs of man and woman and other material to ensure that marriage is a growing and enriching relationship.

Possibly there is too much information and too many guidelines and principles. The American cultural background and idiom could be an obstacle and lessen the effectiveness of the books.

I think married couples will profit in many ways from these handbooks—to be used as handbooks. They could be used in pre-marriage courses though experience is needed to grasp many aspects, problems and challenges of married life. I would think that couples married for a few years at least will find much here and be grateful for these handbooks. There is much sound wisdom, the fruit of experience in personal married life and working with married couples.

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### **Hermeneutics and the Bible in Liberation Theology**

#### **A Critique from other Companions in the Struggle**

**Eleazar S. FERNANDEZ**

The author is a citizen of the Philippines (now at 1008 19th Avenue South, Nashville, Tennessee 37212) currently doing Ph D studies at Vanderville University, U.S.A. In this paper he analyses the method of liberation theology in respect to the role of the Bible in it and shows that while LT had always stressed the relation of the Bible to life it had not paid sufficient attention to the cultural conditionings of the biblical text. Feminist theology, Black theology and Asian theology have helped LT to unchain God from the Bible, liberate life and free the Bible itself from being a frozen text to being a pointer to God's own liberating action in the whole of history

**W**hat has often been cited as one of the crises of modernity, that is, the faith-cognitive crisis of most Godtalks,<sup>1</sup> is not much of a crisis to a poor Christian in a remote barrio of a Third World country. It is remarkable that even though the poor are the ones who have suffered the most, they are the ones who have not lost the sense of the sacred in their lives. Rather than start with unbelief, agnosticism, and scepticism the common ailments of the Western secular "man" which many Western theologians have attempted to claim as a universal modern phenomenon I will start with the firm religious belief of the "non-person."

## I. The Place and Authority of the Bible in Liberation Theology

The Bible still plays a central role in the lives of the poor Christian communities. However, its centrality is relative to life, and more specifically to the life of the community. Life takes first place! As Carlos Mesters puts it,

The people's main interest is not to interpret the Bible, but to *interpret life with the help of the Bible*. They try to be faithful, not primarily to the meaning the text has in itself (the historical and literal meaning), but to the meaning they discover in the text for their own lives.<sup>2</sup>

Life is not for the Bible, but the Bible for life. It should promote life, be at the service of life, and not the other way around. This is the way the Bible came into being. Faithfulness to the Bible does not mean living by every letter of the Bible, or fitting one's life to the biblical times, but accepting the meaning that the Bible conveys for the life of the community. Faithfulness is not measured by claims to originality or by a meticulous process of repetition, but by the pursuit of a life generating meaning that is reproduced as our context engages in a dialectical interplay with the text. Liberation theology can affirm with Sharon Welch that the Bible like Christianity as a whole "contains something of truth not because of its origins, but because it liberates people now from specific forms of oppression."<sup>3</sup>

With an understanding of the significant place of the Bible in liberation theology crucial but relative to life we can now understand the nature of its authority and inspiration. Authority is not based on inerrancy and plenary inspiration, but on the Bible's *function* for the community.<sup>4</sup>

## II. Biblical Hermeneutics in Liberation Theology

### 1. *The Method and Thrust of Liberation Theology*

Liberation theology's biblical hermeneutics can be understood only within the perspective of liberation theology's methodology. In this way we appreciate the liberating significance of its hermeneutical approach.

Social transformation is more than a battle of will and high powered weapons. A person who is dedicated to the task of social transformation must be equipped with a method of knowing, of seeing and analyzing events and facts. How a person sees influences vision. The method of doing theology cannot be dismissed

without grave consequences to the cause of social transformation. Juan Luis Segundo makes this point:

It is the fact that the one and only thing that can maintain the liberative character of any theology is not its content but its methodology. It is the latter that guarantees the continuing bite of theology whatever terminology may be used and however much the existing system tries to reabsorb it into itself.<sup>5</sup>

While Segundo's presentation of methodology is more at the level of the formal theological object (hermeneutical circle), both Joe Holland and Peter Henriot have set liberation theology's methodology within the broader perspective of a "pastoral circle" or a "circle of praxis."<sup>6</sup> This pastoral circle has four moments, namely: (1) insertion, (2) social analysis, (3) theological reflection, and (4) pastoral planning. At the moment of *insertion*, the questions raised are: Where and with whom are we locating ourselves as we begin our process? Whose experience is being considered? For the moment of *social analysis* the appropriate questions are: Which analytical tradition is being followed? Are there presuppositions in these analyses that need to be tested? The *theological* moment of reflection raises the questions: What methodological assumptions underlie the theological reflection? What is the relationship of social analysis to theology? Finally, at the level of *pastoral planning*, the issue of the victims' participation in the pastoral planning is being raised.

Another liberation theologian who has made an extensive exposition of the circle of praxis is Clodovis Boff. His circle of praxis covers three headings or mediations, viz., (1) the socio-analytic mediation, (2) the hermeneutic mediation, (3) the practical mediation.<sup>7</sup> The socio-analytic mediation constitutes the material theoretical object, the hermeneutical mediation the formal theoretical object (theological reflection proper), and the practical mediation of faith the real concrete object (question of practical relevance). Each of the three mediation or stages has its area of concentration. The first focuses on the relationship of theology to social sciences, the second on the relationship of theology with the Scripture, and the third on the relationship of theology and praxis. To oversimplify things, liberation theology follows what is commonly known as the see, judge, and act method. If one is familiar with the process of community organizing, one also can perceive some similarities with the three steps of organizing, arouse, organize, and mobilize.

Whether one reads a work that is littered with abstruse academic terms, such as that of Boff, or the easily readable style of

Holland and Henriot, one can discern that liberation theologians are in agreement that "insertion" or the life experience of the people is the locus of reflection and the object of transforming action. Specifically, this is the life experience of the poor and oppressed people. A theology that springs from the experience of the poor and wants to be a means for their liberation must grapple with the same issues that the poor are grappling with. This theology requires a socio-analytic tool (social analysis) to diagnose society: it must undergo a stage of socio-analytic mediation. The word "mediation" is used here because the so-called "facts" are not given to us directly, but always through a prism.

The socio-analytic mediation is *constitutive* of liberation theology; it is not exterior to it (relationship of application) but interior (relationship of constitution).<sup>8</sup> The relationship of application sees the relation of two disciplines as external. It presupposes a duality of autonomous elements that come in contact. A theology that operates on the relationship of application often uses tools to understand society, but there is no intrinsic relation involved. Primarily it operates on the model of *translation*, a translation from the Scripture or church encyclicals.<sup>9</sup> While it appears to use social sciences, it is a theology that is not shaped by the context. One indication that this theology does not establish an intrinsic link with the "sciences of the social" is its *moralistic* approach. For liberation theology, its relationship with the "sciences of the social" is intrinsic and constitutive. Its theology is shaped by the use and outcome of the socio-analytic tool. In fact it considers the use of tools as already a *political choice*.<sup>10</sup> Though many liberal theologians claim that their theologies relate to the "sciences of the social" in a constitutive manner, a notable distinction should not be overlooked. The liberal theologians' interest in using various scientific disciplines is primarily to uphold the cognitive status of theology in the academic world and relate theology to other disciplines. Liberation theology on its part considers the socio-analytic mediation as constitutive because it is a *demand of praxis*.<sup>11</sup>

It is only after the socio-analytic mediation and critique of the life experience of the poor Christian communities that the hermeneutical mediation comes in. For Boff this is the theology reflection proper or the formal theoretical object. Hermeneutical mediation seeks to transform the material object into a formal theological object. The material object is posed in the light of theological reason and Scripture. This is the sphere of what Boff calls theological

"pertinency," or that which really makes the *theologicity* of theology.<sup>12</sup> What makes liberation theology a theology is not the material object, but the manner or the *modus operandi* in which it develops its material. The material object must be reworked according to the mode of theological production in order to become theological product. The proper theological products come in when, to use Gustavo Gutierrez definition of theology, we arrive at a critical reflection on praxis *in the light of God's word*.<sup>13</sup> It is the eye of faith that transposes the material objects into theological reflection. Here it becomes clear that theology is indeed a "second moment" in liberation theology. Like Hegel's owl of Minerva, it only rises at sundown.

The final mediating moment of liberation theology is the practical mediation or praxis. It begins with praxis and ends in praxis. This is not, however, a return to the beginning praxis but an enriched, transformative praxis. Liberation theology has accepted the challenge of Marx's eleventh thesis to Feuerbach: "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways, the point however is to *change* it."<sup>14</sup>

## 2. *Liberation Theology's Biblical Hermeneutics*

Liberation theology's approach to biblical hermeneutics is intrinsically a part of its theological methodology, and is attuned to its liberating thrust. Its distinct character, in comparison to other hermeneutical-exegetical approaches, can be properly perceived only within the perspective of liberation theology's method. Separated from its location within liberation theology's methodology and thrust, it is stripped of its liberating character. I have identified at least seven basic features of this hermeneutical approach.

*First*, it should be clearly stated and without any pretension of neutrality that liberation biblical hermeneutics is a hermeneutics from the underside of history. It is an interpretation of the biblical text from the epistemological privilege of the poor. To be truly responsive to its context and faithful to the biblical text, liberation hermeneutics cannot but read the text through the eye-glasses of the marginalized of society

When we say that liberation hermeneutics is a reading of the text from the epistemological privilege of the poor, this only means that a reading is affected by one's social location. Or to put it bluntly, a reading is never neutral. A reading is more than a read-



ing of what is there: it is actually an interpretation, and an interpretation is shaped by one's geographical and social location. Added to the polysemous nature of the text, capable of various readings, the social location of the interpreter affects what is seen in the text. Rather than claiming a neutral interpretation, liberation theology opted for reading the text with the spectacles of the poor.

As the dominant ideas of the age are generally favorable to the interest of the ruling few, a "hermeneutics from below" is an indispensable companion of the "hermeneutics of suspicion." These two have been effective weapons in the hands of liberation theologians in their deconstructive and constructive tasks. With these hermeneutical weapons liberation theologians have unmasked the so-called liberating character of the Western Enlightenment project. Jose Comblin, a liberation theologian, has rightly put his finger on Western criticism by accusing it of ideological blindness. The academic theologies that blossomed under its inspiration claim to possess the universal truth, but they are as conditioned as other claims. Its criticism promoted freedom, but in the final analysis, it is the freedom of the bourgeois man not the freedom of the poor.<sup>15</sup>

The *second* distinctive characteristic of liberation theology's biblical hermeneutics has something to do with its location (in the second moment or mediation) within the over-all liberation methodology and its relative character, relative, i.e., to life. Located somewhere in the second moment of mediation, it is clear that its *raison d'être* is not biblical scholarship for its own sake; rather, it is a means of engaging with the text for the sake of human beings. The text is not taken in and of itself, but always in relation to us. It is not primarily for the consumption of the academic community, though it challenges the academic community. Unlike other hermeneutical-exegetical approaches, it is explicitly tied to a people's movement and a particular brand of theology. Liberation hermeneutics makes use of scientific hermeneutical-exegetical approaches, but always for the sake of linking them to concrete transformative praxis.

As a hermeneutic approach that seeks to link the text to the transformative praxis of the struggling communities, liberation hermeneutics must combine the disciplines that open up the past with the disciplines that explain the present. This constitutes the *third* distinctive characteristic of liberation biblical hermeneutics. To be a text that relates to us now, a fusion of the horizons of the past and the present must happen. The historical-critical method has failed to make the fusion because of its preoccupation with discovering the

original context or message. "It must be conceded," notes Christopher Rowland, "that we have been singularly negligent over the application of historical criticism to our world, and to ourselves as interpreters."<sup>16</sup> The historical critical method has been rigid in its judgment of the past, but in no way has it made the text a judgment upon us today. It is usually argued that practitioners of the historical-critical method have to withhold judgment in order to attain objective distance and avoid the pitfalls of *eisegesis*. This, however, fails to understand that in the effort to let the original context and message come out, interpretation or historical reconstruction is already involved.

Literary approaches provide a corrective to those methods that focus on the meaning and context behind the text. They provides a way of interpretation in which the message is perceived in front of the text, or an interpretation in which the text projects a world where we may poetically dwell in.<sup>17</sup> Yet, though they claim to project a message in front of the text, many literary critiques tend to remain in the maze of linguistic protocols and structures; they fail to critique the reader and his/her world which shapes the reading, or see the literature as an expression of the historico-material condition.<sup>18</sup> Understanding the text or literature as an expression of the historico-material condition is an approach which liberation hermeneutics puts foremost, making it appropriate for ideological critique.<sup>19</sup> Appropriating literary approaches within this frame something in which the present liberation hermeneutic is weak would be an added boon to liberation theology.

Combining the disciplines that open up the past with the disciplines that open up the present requires that one should subject to a thorough critique not only the past but also the world of the interpreter. The social formation of the contemporary reader has to be analyzed, too. This, liberation theology has done, while other biblical-hermeneutical approaches have ignored it. By combining the literary and historical approaches to exegesis, liberation theology can be all the more strengthened.

By placing the Bible at the service of life and adopting a hermeneutical approach that links the horizon of the past with that of the present, liberation biblical hermeneutics has restored the spirit of the text. I consider this the *fourth* distinctive characteristic of liberation hermeneutics. The historical-critical method, in spite of its noble contributions, has made the text dead and alien to the present. Liberation biblical hermeneutics has made the text closer to our

experience, particularly to the experience of the poor. This has to be: liberation hermeneutics itself is rooted in the spiritual and political rupture of the poor. Pablo Richard has underscored this point: "This root is at the same time political and spiritual. This explains the radical nature of the new hermeneutics in Latin America."<sup>20</sup> Liberation hermeneutics' concern for recovering the "sentido espiritual," something that is often lost in the forest of modern exegesis, draws deep from the wells of the early Church Fathers. They, according to Richard, considered three dimensions of the "sentido espiritual" in their hermeneutics, viz., (1) "sentido alegorico" effecting new understanding, (2) "sentido tropologico o moral" focuses on living, (3) "sentido analogico o escatologico" hope giving.<sup>21</sup> Hence, to interpret with the sense of the spirit is to read with a new understanding, a commitment to life, and with a renewed hope.

The *fifth* point deals with a specific hermeneutical model that liberation hermeneutics espouses. With a biblical hermeneutics that seeks to join the disciplines that open the past with the disciplines that explain the present for the sake of transformative praxis, and with the ongoing dialectical interplay of text and reader in his/her historical situatedness, I think it is absurd to charge liberation exegesis of "proof texting." This is in fact the charge of many Western theologians and biblical scholars, among them Russell Pregeant.<sup>22</sup>

Referring in particular to Jon Sobrino, Pregeant considers liberation hermeneutics as a form of proof texting, for it uses *direct analogy* as a mode of authorizing theology. I would say that if there is what seems to be direct analogy in liberation hermeneutical approach, it is because the poor have discovered a close affinity with the experience of the biblical people. But even if there is a close affinity between the experience of poor people in Latin America with that of the pariah people in the Bible, liberation theology has not used direct analogy to the extent of proof texting to authorize a theological position. Liberation hermeneutics does not engage in proof texting because it consciously maintains a dynamic interaction of text, pretext, context, and the reader. Faithfulness to the biblical text for liberation hermeneutics does not mean fitting one's life into the world of the text, or selecting passages from the Bible to authorize one's theological position, or to seek analogies. There is no direct analogical application for the reason that, aside from placing the text in its context and the reader in his/her own present context, the text and one's option in history are mediated by some sort of an

ideology, or what Juan Luis Segundo calls "deutero-learning" — learning how to learn.<sup>23</sup> Boff cannot concede to the charge of direct analogy, nor similarly to what he calls "correspondence of terms model." Instead, he calls liberation biblical hermeneutics approach a "correspondence of relations." The identity of senses is not to be sought at the level of message and context as such, but at the level of the relationship between the context and message on each side.<sup>24</sup>

The *sixth* important feature of liberation biblical hermeneutics has to do with the role of biblical scholars in relation to the people. When biblical hermeneutics is seen within the commitment of serving the struggling communities, and when the primary emphasis is on the spirit rather than the letter, biblical scholars play a supportive role. If the primary emphasis is on uncovering the so-called neutral facts, or the "letter," the Bible is alienated from the common people, and people are at the mercy of the biblical scholars.

*Finally*, liberation hermeneutics sees the Scripture as itself a sedimented interpretation of the earliest Christian communities' encounter with the living God. Fundamentalists think that their approach is the classical: from biblical text to the writer's theological intentions and then to the external referents.<sup>25</sup> Instead, it is the other way around: the text is a product, a sedimentation of the experience of the Christian communities.

### 3. *Critique from Other Liberation-Oriented Theologies*

Liberation theology since its inception has been subjected to various criticisms. Many have criticized it as a distortion of the Gospel and a reduction of the Gospel's message. I will not deal with the criticism coming from this group, but from other groups who share similar commitments and vision with the poor. With this, I am particularly referring to the critique made by feminists, Blacks, Asians, Africans, American Indians, and other minorities. The choice is based on their commitment to liberation and the distinct perspective that they contribute to the liberation process.

The *first* issue that I would like to bring out is one which feminists studies have pointed out so succinctly: the seeming silence or ideological blindness of liberation theology to pose a question to the Bible itself. Liberation theology has subjected the liberal Enlightenment project of criticism to a hermeneutics of suspicion and rightly so. By suspecting the liberal project of criticism, liberation theology has exposed the bourgeois man and discovered the non-

person the poor. However, feminists charge that liberation theologians have never suspected the biblical *text itself*. Citing in particular Juan Luis Segundo, Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza and Sharon Ringe have observed that, in spite of Segundo's efforts to subject all possible enslaving conditions to ideological suspicion, he has not turned his suspicion to the text. For them, Segundo's model (hermeneutical circle) does not make room for a critical evaluation of biblical ideologies as expressions of false consciousness.<sup>26</sup> "A feminist hermeneutics," argues Fiorenza, "cannot trust or accept the Bible and tradition simply as divine revelation."<sup>27</sup> Feminist interpretation therefore begins with a hermeneutic of suspicion that applies to both contemporary androcentric interpretations of the Bible and the biblical text itself.

When liberation theology speaks of the "irruption" of Third World peoples for a better future, it generally means the *irruption of the poor*.<sup>28</sup> Liberation theology is an expression of the irruption of the poor; it is an expression of those who have been "absents" in history. In its preoccupation with economic and "class" analysis, it has failed to notice the other reality: that "the irruption the Third World is also the irruption of the non-Christian world;"<sup>29</sup> it has failed to remember the other "absents" of history (history as dominated by the West). This failure of liberation theology to remember the other "absents" has an impact on its perception of Christianity and the particular role of the Bible and non-Christian traditions. This constitutes the *second* criticism charged against liberation theology. Two scholars representing this second point of criticism speak from the point of view of the non-Christian world. Aloysius Pieris and Kwok Pui-Lan.<sup>30</sup> I shall start with Pieris and then connect Kwok's points.

A theology may claim to be an expression of the liberating struggle of the poor, but fails to take seriously the lives of the non-Christian non-biblical poor. It does not necessarily mean that liberation theology intends to dismiss the *world* of the non-Christian poor, but that liberation theology is generally *silent* about it. Pieris has pointed out that in spite of liberation theology's liberating character, it still operates on a "Christ against religion" or "Christ against culture" mentality.<sup>31</sup> This mentality still perceives Christian experience, tradition and the Bible as universally superior over the world of the non-Christians. Though the Bible is perceived as the historical memory of the poor (Pablo Richard), its placement within a "Christ against religion" paradigm has made it an instrument against the non-Chris-

tian non-Western poor.

Pieris' point connects us to Kwok's. Speaking from a "non-biblical world" and influenced by feminist perspectives, Kwok (Hong Kong) raises a serious question regarding the place of the Bible in a non-Christian world. This is not a problem if one believes in using the Bible to convert the so-called "pagans" non-Christians. But for Christians who have "global awareness," asserts Kwok, this is a serious problem. This is a serious problem because "two-thirds of our world is made up of non-Christians, and most of these peoples are under the yoke of exploitation by the privileged one-third world," who happen to be identified with the Bible.<sup>32</sup> Thus, she calls for a new understanding of the role of the Bible, its truth claim and authority, and its place with regard to other faiths and cultures. She argues against basing the truth claim of the Bible on its being the supposed revealed Word of God precisely because the majority of her people do not believe in this faith assertion. Like the feminist theologians, she establishes the authority of the Bible not on the claim for "metaphysical or revelational truth." For her, "the authority of the Bible can no longer hide behind the unchallenged belief that it is the Word of God," but whether "the Bible can be of help in the global struggle for liberation."<sup>33</sup> She also thinks that a dialogical imagination approach is fitting.

Focussing on the problem of classism, the *third* charge against liberation theology is its alleged failure to incorporate in its liberation project and theological reflection the experience of those who have suffered because of their race and culture. For a long time it has remained oblivious to the plight of people in the midst of Latin America the Amerindians and Black population. A theologico-biblical hermeneutics that focuses on the class problem has often forgotten to raise theological issues about the Bible itself and the claims of other traditions as sources of theological reflection. Liberation theology should start rethinking about the Bible in relation to the cultural traditions of people both oral and written as sources for theological reflection.

#### 4. *Lessons Learned and Clarification of Some Points of Liberation Hermeneutics*

Liberation theology has taken seriously the critique of theologies considered as companions in the struggle. This is clear in the introduction to the 15th anniversary edition of Gustavo Gutierrez's *A Theology of Liberation*. In this edition, Gutierrez frankly ac-

knowledgeed that it has been a social lie of liberation theology to claim that there is no racism in Latin America. Expressing his sentiments and profound realization,

I must admit, therefore, that from these contacts [particularly referring to other Third World theologians through EATWOT] with these other theologians I have grown in hope and have become more sensitive to the suffering of human groups geographically and culturally far removed from us.<sup>34</sup>

Critiques from the companions in the struggle have not really undermined the basic starting point and commitment of liberation theology, nor do they intend to undermine it either. Liberation theology should not abandon its starting point the experience of the poor because that is where its relevance lies; nor should it abandon viewing reality from the experience of the poor and its commitment to them. This is where its relevance and distinct contribution to theology and the liberation struggle lie.

Though it clings tenaciously to its starting point and commitment, liberation theology needs to expand its world, shake-off its lethargic limbs, and carry forward the consequences of its radical insights. Liberation theology has actually grasped the crucial point when it says that the Bible is relative to life; that the objective is not to interpret the Bible but to interpret life with the help of the Bible. This proper starting point creates an openness for liberation theology to consider other experiences and cultural traditions (of women, people of color, and non-Christian peoples) as sources of theological reflection.

To accept the relative or functional status of the Bible with regard to life actually does three things: (1) unchains God from the Bible, (2) liberates life, and (3) frees the Bible itself. When the Bible is seen as relative to life or for purposes of interpreting life, it unchains God from the Bible because the message of the Bible points to the primary locus of God's activity in the actual life situation. To say that the Bible is relative to life or for the sake of life is to focus one's attention on the activity of God in history with the help of the Bible. Through the Bible we come to know the God of our fathers and mothers in faith, only to remind us that the same God is working in our midst too. Liberation theologians can agree with Karl Rahner in asserting that the history through which God's grace is mediated to human beings is "not always and in first instance a word, and consequently not a scriptural word. It is rather salvation history as a whole."<sup>35</sup>

Carlos Mesters further strengthens our point when he argues persuasively that the "Word of God is not just the Bible. The Word of God is within reality and it can be discovered with the help of the Bible."<sup>36</sup> Secondly, the relative function of the Bible liberates life; life is not bound to the letter and world of the Bible but the Bible helps to illumine life now. Thirdly, this liberates the Bible itself and prevents it from being construed as absolute and infallible (the Protestant Pope), and cuts off bibliolatry.

The three points considered above press us to discern the locus of God's activity in the world with the aid of the Bible. To discern the activity of God outside the Bible, though with the help of the Bible, only means basing its authority *outside* of the text (concrete history), and puts us alongside the feminist insistence (Fiorenza and others) that the "litmus test for invoking Scripture as the Word of God must be whether or not biblical texts and traditions seek to end relations of domination and oppression."<sup>37</sup> With a hermeneutical circle starting from concrete action in history and back to history, Sobrino rightly asserts that "the criterion must be historical in character and must originate within concrete history."<sup>38</sup>

Liberation theology's proper placement of the Bible with regard to life, when properly pursued, actually avoids Itumeleng Mosala's warning of absolutizing the Bible and making it an instrument of domination.<sup>39</sup> Pablo Richard is aware of this danger, for he makes this point emphatically: "If we absolutize the Bible as if it were a direct and material word of God, our history will be imprisoned by the text and eventually we (sic) wiped out." For there could not be a "worse domination than that imposed in the name of 'sacred' text."<sup>40</sup> To absolutize the Bible is actually *to imprison our history to the text* and freeze the activity of God in the Bible. This has to be opposed because the Word of God is more than the Bible and the activity of God is outside the Bible (though also through the Bible). If this is the case, liberation theology opens the possibility of acknowledging the salvific value of other faiths, and starts using the Bible in a "dialogical imagination" approach with other non-Christian classic texts.

### III. Concluding Challenge

The search for liberating hermeneutics is far from over, but this essay has to end. There may still be weak points in liberation hermeneutics that should be pointed out but may have been overlooked in this essay, that is why the search has to continue. This



search is at the same time a struggle, because interpreting life — which is the business of hermeneutics — is a struggle between conflicting interpretations. As hermeneutists who have opted to interpret life from the experience of those who suffer and struggle, we are all challenged to engage in this relentless quest and struggle. We need to engage in mutual search and criticism to strengthen our approaches to hermeneutics that we may truly interpret life and serve effectively our respective communities with the help of sacred texts.

### FOOTNOTES

1. See Sharon WELCH, *Communities of Resistance and Solidarity*, New York: Orbis Books 1985), pp 1-14. Welch has identified two fundamental crises of Christian theology, viz., (1) cognitive (conceptual), and (2) moral. Most liberal and revisionist theologies have focused on the first dimension of crisis (though not negating the second crisis), while feminist and liberation theologies concentrate on the second. If the cognitive crisis predominates, the usual issues and questions that are given focus are: the nature of language about God, the truth-claim of theology, the possibility of belief, and so forth. Theodicy is one theological issue where we can distinguish between a theology that considers the cognitive crisis as its main preoccupation and a theology that focuses on the moral crisis. Compare the familiar rational proofs of the existence of God and the liberal responses to the theodicy issue with that of liberation theology, e.g., Gustavo GUTIERREZ's, *On Job: God-Talk and the Suffering of the Innocent*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell, New York: Orbis Books 1987. While Welch has identified two crises which haunt Christian theology, Peter C. HODGSON has brought out five crises: (1) cognitive, (2) historical, (3) political, (4) socioeconomic, and (5) religious, all of which are confronting the church and theology today. See his *Revisioning the Church: Ecclesial Freedom in the New Paradigm*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press 1988, pp. 11-19.

2. Carlos MESTERS, *Defenseless Flower: A New Reading of the Bible*, trans. Francis McDonagh. New York: Orbis Books 1989), p. 9. Emphasis mine.

3. WELCH, p. 53. Welch argues against the common notion of equating the Christian-biblical truth with what is original. If the Christian-biblical truth is that which is original, what can we say about some accounts in the Bible that are oppressive to women and slaves? This is not to mention the questionable character of the search for origin (Michel Foucault). For Welch, as with many feminists, the truth is that which liberates now — not faithful repetition of what is construed as original. Please refer to the works of Michel FOUCAULT as they bear on the critical thought of Sharon Welch: *The Archeology of Knowledge*. New York: Harper and Row 1976; *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. New

York: Vintage Books 1973; "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow. New York: Pantheon 1984.

4. Christine E. GUDORF, "Liberation Theology's Use of Scripture: A Response to First World Critics," *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology*, vol.41 no.1. (January 1987), p. 8. Gudorf considers the authority of the Bible in liberation theology as based on the function that it plays for the life of the community; also refer to David Kelsey's, *The Uses of the Scripture in Recent Theology*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press 1975.

5. Juan Luis SEGUNDO, *Liberation of Theology*. New York: Orbis Books 1976, p. 40. The importance that Segundo gives to methodology finds expression in the "hermeneutical circle" that he has developed. There are four decisive factors in Segundo's circle. The first refers to a kind of experiencing reality which brings one to an ideological suspicion; second, the ideological suspicion is applied to the whole superstructure and in particular to theology; third, a suspicion is directed at the prevailing interpretations particularly of the Bible. Finally, a new hermeneutic is arrived at, that is, a new way of interpreting (p. 9). The focus should be on "being liberative" rather than "talking about liberation."

6. Joe HOLLAND and Peter HENRIOT, *Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice*. New York: Orbis Books 1980, p. 8.

7. Clodovis BOFF, *Theology and Praxis: Epistemological Foundations*. New York: Orbis Books 1987. This work claims to anchor liberation theology in a solid epistemological ground.

8. BOFF, p. 30.

9. See Edward FARLEY, *Ecclesial Reflection*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press 1982.

10. Jose Miguez BONINO supports this particular point. Please refer to his work, *Toward a Christian Political Ethics*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press 1983, p. 47.

11. BOFF, pp. 4-8.

12. BOFF, pp. 132-154.

13. Gustavo GUTIERREZ, *A Theology of Liberation*. New York: Orbis Books 1988, p. 9.

14. Karl MARX, *Theses on Feuerbach*, in Frederick Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy*. London: Lawrence and Wishart Ltd 1947, p. 78.

15. Jose COMBLIN, *The Church and National Security State*. New York: Orbis Books 1979, pp. 4-9; Jon SOBRINO, *Christology at the Crossroads*. New York: Orbis Books 1978, p. 19. Liberation theologians criticize Western theological projects because they are oblivious of their own pre-suppositions and the experience of the poor. For Sobrino, however, there is another side of the Enlightenment — its critique of alienating social structures

— that needs to be retrieved. This side found expression in the thought of Karl Marx. It should be noted that the Enlightenment project has been subjected to criticism from various angles, but unlike others, liberation theology makes its criticism from the perspective of the poor.

16. Christopher ROWLAND and Mark CORNER, *Liberating Exegesis: The Challenge of Liberation Theology to Biblical Studies*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press 1989, p. 37.

17. Literary approaches draw us out from the constant preoccupation of seeking for the reality behind the text, the quest for the original context, the intention of the author, and other related concerns. They enable us not only to see the message in front of the text, but also to see a possible world or a different form of human dwelling which is projected by the text. The notion that texts, specially mythopoetic texts, project a world which negates the necessity of the "what is," has led to the growing acknowledgement of the revolutionary potentials of mythopoetic language. Peter HODGSON, appropriating the ideas of Paul Ricoeur especially on his theory of three-fold "mimesis" (prefiguration, configuration, and refiguration), has caught the value of the literary approach in understanding a text. He underscores the need for seeking out the "world unfolded by the text in front of itself," while warning of the excesses of the structuralist-post structuralist preoccupation with language as an internal system of signs. For him, the purpose of reading literary and historical works is to "enlarge, enrich, and reshape the world that will serve as the horizon for one's own engagement in a newly configured, transfigured praxis." Paraphrasing Martin Heidegger, "one must learn not only to think and read poetically but also build and dwell poetically" (p. 92). And I would add that to "dwell poetically" is, indeed, to "dwell politically." See his work, *God in History: Shapes of Freedom*. Nashville: Abingdon Press 1989. For more clarification on the theory of *mimesis*, which depicts a movement that finally leads to praxis, please refer to the works of Paul RICOEUR, *Time and Narrative*, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer, 3 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1984, 1985, 1988.

18. Howard Clark KEE, a New Testament scholar, has expressed his displeasure with those literary and linguistic approaches which limit their range of inquiry to the grammar, syntax, and inter-lingual functions. For him, socio linguistic offers a better approach because it ties the language to the social context. See his work, *Knowing the Truth: A Sociological Approach to New Testament Interpretation*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press 1989, pp. 55-60. One approach which for Clark Kee neglects the context (and even the text) is the structuralist method (p. 61).

19. A few biblical writings which underscore the importance of the historico-material condition and the ideological undergirdings of literary productions are: Kuno FUSSEL, "Materialist Readings of the Bible: Report on an Alternative Approach to Biblical Text," in *God of the Lowly: Socio-*

*Historical Interpretations of the Bible*, ed. Willy SCHOTTROFF. New York: Orbis Books 1984; Norman GOTTWALD, *Tribes of Yahweh*. New York: Orbis Books 1979; also his *Hermeneutics*. New York: Orbis Books 1983; Fernando BELO, *A Materialist Reading of the Gospel of Mark*. New York: Orbis Books 1981; Michel CLEVENOT, *Materialist Approaches to the Bible*. New York: Orbis Books 1985.

20. Pablo RICHARD, "Lectura Popular de la Biblia en Americana Latina," *Revista de Interpretation Biblica Latino Americana*, no.1 (San Jose, Costa Rica: 1988), pp. 31-48.

21. Pablo RICHARD, pp. 36-37.

22. Russell PREGEANT, "Christological Groundings for Liberation Praxis," *Modern Theology*. 5:2 (January 1989), pp. 113-132.

23. SEGUNDO, pp. 97-124. Segundo's idea of ideology actually invalidates Pregeant's accusation that liberation hermeneutics uses direct analogy or direct translation or proof texting. Segundo underscores the ideological content of biblical revelation as something inevitable acknowledging, therefore, its contextual character. To acknowledge the contextuality of the biblical revelation means that one's relation to it is not that of repetition, but critical appropriation into a different context. For Segundo, critical appropriation involves another ideological mediation or a learning to learn. Confronted with "new problems that either were not dealt with in the Scripture or were dealt with in a very different context," the Christian has to render a decision that best fit to the situation (p. 117). The gap between the past and the ever-changing present has to be "bridged" by ideology.

24. BOFF, pp. 142-150.

25. ROWLAND, p. 65. For another study of the nature of the New Testament canon, refer to an essay of J. Severino CROATTO, "Biblical Hermeneutics in the Theologies of Liberation," in *Irruption of the Third World: Challenge to Theology*, ed. Virginia FABELLA and Sergio TORRES. New York: Orbis Books 1983, Pp. 152-153. The canon ("closure" for Croatto) is actually part of the hermeneutic or interpretation process. The very conflict of interpretation — in this case the traditions — leads to the *fixing* of the *event-report-tradition* in the form of a canon. Though the canon is an attempt for closure of what began as a polysemic event, it is not really the end. Interpretation, as production of meaning (not *repetition*), continues. The polysemic event has now become a polysemic text. The formation of the canon is not the end, neither the beginning, but a moment.

26. Susan Brooks THISTLETHWAITE and Mary Potter ENGEL, eds., *Lift Every Voice: Constructing Christian Theologies from the Underside*. San Francisco: Harper and Row 1990, p. 260.

27. Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, *Bread Not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation*. Boston: Beacon Press 1984, p. x.

28. GUTIERREZ, p. xx

29. Aloysius PIERIS, "The Place of Non-Christian Religions and Cultures in the Evolution of Third World Theology," in *Irruption of the Third World: Challenge to Theology*, (see note 25) p. 113.

30. For another work of Aloysius PIERIS that treats the issue of the irruption of the non-Christian world, please refer to his book, *An Asian Theology of Liberation*. New York: Orbis Books 1988. Another scholar who critiques Christian theology from the perspective of the irruption of the non-Christian peoples is Kwok Pui-Lan. See Kwok PUI-LAN, "Discovering the Bible in the Non-Biblical World," *Lift Up Every Voice*, (see note 26) pp. 270-282.

31. Aloysius PIERIS, "The Place of Non-Christian Religions and Cultures in the Evolution of Third World Theology," *Irruption of the Third World*, p. 115.

32. Kwok PUI-LAN, p. 271.

33. Kwok PUI-LAN, p. 274.

34. GUTIERREZ, pp. xxii-xxiii.

35. Karl RAHNER, "Scripture as the Church's Book," *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, trans. William V. Dych. New York: The Seabury Press 1978, p. 370.

36. Carlos MESTERS, "The Use of the Bible in Christian Communities of the Common People," in *The Bible and Liberation: Political and Social Hermeneutics*, p. 122.

37. FIORENZA, p. xiii

38. Jon SOBRINO, "The Hermeneutic Circle," *Voices from the Third World*, 10. no.2 (EATWOT: June 1987), p. 30.

39. See Itumeleng MOSALA, "The Use of the Bible in Black Theology," *Voices from the Third World*, 10. no.2, pp. 90-109.

40. Pablo RICHARD, "The Bible as Historical Memory of the Poor," *Theology in the Third World*, Series 2, Year 4. Quezon City: Philippines: Socio-Pastoral Institute, p. 7, mimeographed.

# The Resurrection of Jesus and Human Liberation

Dr George THERUKATTIL, MCBS

The resurrection of Jesus is the promise of our resurrection and total liberation. Faith in the resurrection is verifiable in the faith of the disciples and is a faith sustained by hope and expressed in love. To believe in the resurrection is not a question of metaphysics or the acceptance of a particular fact, but a participation in the life shown by Jesus, which included the acceptance of his own death in a struggle against all forms of death, and was sealed by the Father when He raised Jesus by the power of the Spirit. Dr Therukattil works in the Department of Post-Graduate Studies and Research in Christianity of the University of Mysore, and in 1990 published four articles in the JOURNAL on the eucharist and liberation.

**H**uman beings never fully live in their present. They are beings with a past who live in the present oriented to a future. They always dream of their future and are always on the way to realize themselves on all levels: biological, social, cultural, spiritual and transcendental. They long for freedom from all alienations that constrict their existence: physical and psychological suffering, pain and death, and every spiritual evil such as sin and hatred.<sup>1</sup> They not only long for freedom from all these, but look forward to their own fulfilment as human persons, in their concrete corporate existences, and to the fulfilment in the capacity for the Infinite that God has placed in their being. In a word, they long for integral and total liberation.

## Resurrection and Liberation

The resurrection is this utopia that every human being longs for. The "resurrection now becomes the symbol of the Christian utopia."<sup>2</sup> It is the announcement of total liberation, especially from the

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1. L. BOFF, *Jesus Christ Liberator*, New York: Orbis Books 1987, pp. 134-35.

2. J. SOBRINO, *Spirituality of Liberation. Toward Political Holiness*, New York: Orbis Books 1988, p. 129.

reign of death.<sup>3</sup> It is the eschatologization of the full human reality, a radical realization of human potencies at all levels. It is the total transfiguration of human reality, both corporal and spiritual, and the introduction of the human person, body and soul, into the Kingdom of God. "Resurrection is the new world which God creates, it is our emptiness filled by him with his fullness, it is the new creation, by God . . . . It is the fulfilment of all things . . . it is eternal life."<sup>4</sup>

Such a total and integral liberation is what is promised in the resurrection by the God of the Bible. In the Bible God is not revealed as a God motionless in serene majesty, as the philosophers would picture for us, but as one who is very much concerned with human beings and their total and integral liberation. The Bible shows him as truly falling in love with our humanity, accepting even the lowest social condition, namely, that of a slave so that he would be raised in his humanity as Master.<sup>5</sup> God reveals himself as a liberator God. He bursts into the world of sin and slavery and in the resurrection of Jesus he promises and guarantees resurrection and thereby total and integral liberation to all those who believe in him. The God of the Bible is one who draws us towards our own resurrection, into his own future. In the resurrection of the man Jesus, God's promise is fulfilled in one human being. Death, hatred, sin and all alienations are vanquished. What was hidden potentiality in humankind is revealed in all its clarity and transparency in the resurrection of Jesus. In the man Jesus' resurrection, the movement of divine love has been poured forth into the world leading it to integral and total liberation.

### Verifiability of the Resurrection

As the resurrection of Jesus was an act of God, it could not be seen by human eyes. It could be ascertained only from the effects consequent on it, such as the total transformation of Jesus' frightened disciples, now filled with enthusiasm and dynamism in the conviction that their Master was alive and present among them, and their readiness to face any sufferings and persecution. The only

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3 L. BOFF, *op.cit.*, p. 122.

4 E.C. HOSKYN & Noel DAVEY, *Crucifixion - Resurrection. The Pattern of the Theology and Ethics of New Testament*, London: SPCK 1981, p. 129.

5 See A. PIERIS, "The Three Ingredients of Authentic Humanism, An Autobiographical Essay on the Religious Vows," in *VJTR* 56(1992) p. 4.

thing that can be grasped as historical is the Easter faith of the first disciples. The resurrection of Jesus by God's act does not lie within the sphere of empirical historical research. Of vital interest to us is the very resurrection of the faith of the first disciples which had been dead. The emphasis is thus shifted from the physical resurrection of Jesus to the effect it had on the first disciples. This means "to shift the 'reality' of resurrection from something that happens to the crucified Jesus to something that happens to the existence of the disciples."<sup>6</sup> It was the resurrection of Jesus that awakened and quickened once again the faith of the disciples in the Lordship and Messiahship of Christ. "They came to decipher the mystery of Jesus as being God himself, who visited human beings in mortal flesh."<sup>7</sup> It is this faith and hope that they wanted to evoke and instill in us through the resurrection narratives in the Bible. The empty tomb and the appearance stories are symbolic expressions of a new faith experience of the disciples. "Jesus risen" was the cause of this experience. Form criticism of the resurrection narratives reveals that they are expressions of the Easter faith and hope. The resurrection of Christ was a reality which affected the existence of the disciples and challenged them to a decision of putting their complete faith and hope in God. This faith that the Master was alive and present among them changed their existence, opened up their eschatological horizon of hope and filled them with enthusiasm and dynamism to commit themselves completely for the cause of God. It made them ready to face any suffering and persecution for the integral liberation of humanity and in the process brought them their own liberation. The evangelists show us that the first disciples had a glimpse of the eschatological, the ultimate, and could thus verify their faith. They perceived the truth about God, Jesus, themselves, their calling and the universe. Through the resurrection of Jesus they received hope and a certainty of a new creation in which sin is destroyed and all will be transformed into the Kingdom of God. The resurrection narratives simply invite us to faith and hope in such an act of God, in the way the evangelists themselves believed and hoped.

### Faith in the Resurrection

Hence faith in the resurrection of Jesus is an important and essential condition for the total and integral liberation of human-

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6. J. MOLTSMANN, *Theology of Hope*, London: SCM Press 1967, p.186.

7. L. BOFF *op.cit* p.130.



kind. "To believe in Christ's resurrection is to believe that henceforth nothing is impossible, that God's power is at our disposal for our salvation and the salvation of the world."<sup>8</sup> It is only an indomitable faith in the God of the resurrection and an absolute hope in what he has promised that lead us to a free, unconditional and selfless love of God and to embracing God's will for the liberation of the world. "Belief in the resurrection gives Christians assured in their conviction of victory over death unshakeable freedom, boldness in the face of the 'power of this world'."<sup>9</sup> The resurrection of Jesus is the guarantee of such faith, hope and love.

In human life we generally put faith in a body of transcendent values which are beyond all verifiable experience. Our standing by these values involves an existential wager, but it brings us success, happiness and liberation. This is what faith is. The wager involves our freedom to live by faith and hope in the transcendent reality. As is the case with every wager, its verification can be had only in the end, in the future. Faith in the resurrection is such a wager. Faith in the God who raised Jesus brings a new horizon, a new world of meaning and hope which illumines our human existence. Through it the disciples were reborn to a new existence in which Christ became the centre of their lives. Their "eyes were opened." They were able to grasp the human reality. Through the resurrection-faith they were convinced that God would abolish every inhuman social structure of oppression and death and would offer resurrection total human liberation. Thus the faith in the resurrection gave them hope of their own and the world's liberation. "But we have this promise and look forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of justice" (2 Pet 3:13).

It is this faith that they tried to instil through the Easter narratives. They tell us that placing faith in the God who raised Jesus Christ, the God who can bring into existence what is not in existence or what is dead, is the only way that can give us total and integral liberation. Faith in such a God can liberate us from the fear of death, from self-seeking and from every enslavement. Such a faith keeps us alive in the tomb of pain and give us the power to see visions of tomorrow in the darkness of today. This faith frees us for

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8 F.X. DURRWELL, *In the Redempting Christ. Toward a Theology of Spirituality*, London: Sheed & Wards 1963, p. 89.

9 E. SCHILLEBEECKX, *Christ. The Christian Experience in the Modern World*, London: SCM Press 1980, p. 800.

hope and radical love, and gives us power to resist all evil powers and principalities. Whoever believes and has faith in such a God, already experiences resurrection into a full liberation in the midst of this life itself. Liberation begins when we are delivered from fear and are set in the free space which the resurrection opens up. All liberation movements begin when people are fearless.<sup>10</sup>

## Faith and Hope

Now, faith cannot exist apart from hope. For the object of faith is the God who raises the world in Christ. This object is the motive for hope. "For Christians, the death and resurrection of Jesus, the man on whom they venture their lives, is the ground of hope for a general resurrection for all men."<sup>11</sup> The Easter texts say what may we hope for. Having come to faith, we must preserve in ourselves that desire which opens our heart to the object of faith or we will succumb to the temptation to unbelief. "Without . . . the courage of hope in the lordship of Christ, faith in the resurrection would decay into belief in particular facts, without any consequences."<sup>12</sup>

To believe in the resurrection of Christ is to hope that nothing is impossible for God. Because of our hope in the resurrected Christ we can be liberated from the narrow limits of the present and can think and act completely in terms of what is to come.<sup>13</sup> In the light of this future, Christian hope makes a critique of everything present and activates and mobilizes us to transform the present. "It is hope that brings about an existential restlessness and a salvific disquiet in us, for our wholeness is in God. When we hope, we see that we are incomplete in ourselves and this makes us turn from ourselves ex-centre ourselves into the centre which is God Himself. So it is in hope that we actually come into harmony with our real self and thus realize ourselves."<sup>14</sup> Hope in the resurrection resists fear, the death instinct and the threat of death. It gives us freedom from all anxiety. For the one who hopes in the resurrection there is no

10. J. MOLTSMANN, *Theology of Hope*, London, SCM Press 1979, p. 104.

11. E. SCHILLEBEECKX, *op.cit.*, p. 801.

12. J. MOLTSMANN, *The Church in the Power of Spirit*, London: SCM Press 1977, p. 98.

13. See G. GUTIERREZ, *A Theology of Liberation*, New York: Orbis Books 1973, p. 217.

14. G. THERUKATTIL, "The Eucharist: Prophetic Energizer of Christian Hope and Protest against Unjust Power and Principalities," in *VJTR* 55(1990) p. 289.

ground for anxiety in life or death. In as much as hope liberates us from anxiety, it makes us free to fight against all unjust structures and gives us strength to overcome all obstacles and endure even death and martyrdom that come in the way of the promised future.

## Faith, Hope and Love

All this means that faith, hope and love of God are totally necessary for an integral liberation. By faith, hope and love we make God alone the centre of our lives. In this way we allow God's reign in our lives. This is what Jesus did in his life. He made God the centre of his life. His meat was to do the will of the Father. "Jesus gives himself totally to God, to the point of being able to subsist in him; then is realized what we profess in faith as the incarnation of God or the divinization of a human being. Jesus actualized this possibility that is inscribed within the human."<sup>15</sup> Faith in God as Father was the centre of his life. He lived this faith and responded to it in all situations. It was this that brought liberation to him and liberation to all humanity.

To believe that God raised up Christ is to refuse to find liberation in oneself. The fleshly creature seeks salvation in self. To believe in God and centre one's life in faith and hope in God is to come out of one's self, to receive liberation and new life from God. Faith and hope in God mean forgetting oneself and leaping into the unknown on the word of God. It is attaching oneself firmly to God like Abraham in the Old Testament and Mary in the New Testament. The basic reality of our life is that we are born towards the Other, towards God. Our centre does not lie in ourselves but outside us, in God. What we believe, hope and love is not a truth of reason, but a person. Christ is the object of faith and hope and love, he who is the resurrection and the life. For only God can heal the pain and meet the needs and fill the void in our lives. So basically it is by the ex-centric movement of faith, hope and love that we make God the centre of our lives and realize our true self. This is why our deepest need is letting go of ourselves. "Transcendence reaches its peak in humility, in kenosis."<sup>16</sup> Self-realization calls for the self-transcendent behaviour of faith, hope and love. Faith, hope and love

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15. M. BONINO, *Faces of Jesus*, - *Latin American Christologies*, New York: Orbis Books 1984, p. 26.

16. J.B. LIBANIO, *Spiritual Discernment and Politics*, New York: Orbis Books 1982, p. 107.

are the self-transcendent passions in us and it is by these that we unite ourselves to the transcendent God. It is through these passions for the transcendent that we make God our centre and thereby receive our self-realization.

### **Power of the Resurrection: Praxis of Compassion**

The relevance of the resurrection of Jesus for the liberation of humankind is first of all that it presents Jesus as a man with ultimate value and significance for overcoming the negative features of our existence. It thus overcomes the basic ambivalence of the meaning and meaninglessness of human existence, liberates us from the negative factors and frees us for unconditional selfless love in which consists true liberation.

Secondly, the resurrection of Jesus releases a great power for a total and integral liberation. Death has been invaded by the power of love to transform the world. There is a power beyond death that can resist all evil. The resurrection thus shows that goodness triumphs over evil. It reveals who God is. He is the one whose power includes life and death, who can call into existence things that do not exist. In Him therefore it is possible to "hope against hope." Faith in the resurrection enables the power of the risen Lord to envelop us so that we receive a life that goes beyond our own and carries us forward into a history beyond our capacity. It was this power that changed the lives of the first disciples. They started to live their lives within a horizon of the transcendent space beyond their earthly lives, a space created by a faith and hope which called for unconditional love of God and neighbour. The resurrection faith gives us the power to overcome death and to resist any unjust powers, thus letting the definite Kingdom take shape among us through small anticipatory signs.

Thirdly, the resurrection of Jesus means his continuous and effective presence with us. It means we are never alone. "Resurrection is the continuation of the personal life of Jesus as a man beyond death."<sup>17</sup> Faith in the resurrection is the confession that our redeemer lives, his spirit is alive today. What was the spirit of Jesus? It was the spirit of compassion. This spirit alone can bring total and integral liberation in the world of today. Life can be beautiful with genuine sympathy and compassion, it can be ugly with pettiness and selfishness. Life can be uplifting if there is compassion and en-

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17. E. SCHILLEBEECKX, *op.cit.*, p. 796

couragement, can be destructive when hatred and jealousy reign. Jesus was a man with the spirit of compassion. He saw the presence of God as Father in all things and particularly in all people. It was this spirit of compassion and love that he breathed into a dying world. The resurrection vindicated this spirit and practice of Jesus, the source of his unswerving stand for the Kingdom, for building a more just, fraternal and human world on earth. Jesus selected a path which emphasized values that should inspire our whole individual and collective life. These values possess significant implications for the economic, social and political systems that people fashion for themselves. This path was the path of compassion and love for the poor and downtrodden. The resurrection makes it clear that through Jesus God revealed his own mercy and compassion for the oppressed, his own approach to wealth and power, his own rejection of inhuman social structures and oppression. This path of Jesus enabled him to create the New Israel and thus to start a universal community. This path is the only path for true and integral liberation of humankind. The resurrection puts God's seal of approval on the efforts of Jesus.

Fourthly, if the resurrection puts God's seal of approval to the spirit of Jesus and his practice of compassion, it upholds the practice of those willing to make the spirit and practice of Jesus their own by a readiness to suffer with (*cum + passio* = compassion = suffering with) the poor and downtrodden for their total liberation.<sup>18</sup> The resurrection of Jesus thus presents his spirit and practice as the way to total and integral liberation. It inspires (breathes) this spirit of compassion to change our lives. Without this new life, without this ability to love radically and the courage to hope in the resurrection, faith in the resurrection would be futile and without consequences for the liberation of humanity.

## Conclusion

The resurrection of Jesus is the beginning of liberation, not its completion. The pain of the unfulfilled promise is still with us. Some people venerate the resurrection of Jesus without sharing it in a struggle for the new life that is released by it. To participate in the resurrection means that our lives do not lead towards what is dead, and are not exposed to death's magnetic attraction. Faith and hope

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18. H. FCHEGARAY, *The Practice of Jesus*, New York. Orbis Books 1984, p. 12

in the resurrection is an active denial of death through which we march to life. So it is only those who actively and energetically confront death and all its variants (pain, injustice, sin, oppression) who share the power of the resurrection which God initiated in Jesus Christ.<sup>19</sup> "Jesus was not simply victorious over death as such, but victorious over death as a result of an injustice that compacted the magnitude of the sin of the world."<sup>20</sup>

Viewed in this way, the resurrection of Jesus will not invite us to metaphysical contemplation but to discipleship, to getting the programme of the historical Jesus under way in our own situation.<sup>21</sup> In this perspective we can see that the resurrection is not a drug administered by the Church to those who are unwilling to die. In fact the resurrection calls for a far more radical death than physical death, for, those who believe in resurrection, believe in the resurrection of Jesus *via death*, the consequence of his taking up the cause of the poor and downtrodden. This death calls for preparedness to lose all, to find no security in thought, emotion or action. To face up to this loss, this emptiness, this sacrifice which is, indeed, the meaning of death is what faith in resurrection demands. The test of the faith in the resurrection is the struggle and death one undertakes and undergoes for the fullness of new life for all people. In the process of bringing fullness of life for all, by overcoming injustice, contempt of the lives of the poor and the mechanisms that oppress the downtrodden, a Christian may be exterminated. But then he teaches non-extermination (resurrection) and fullness of life. Faith in resurrection is life that conquers death. That we Christians have faith in the resurrection where death and injustice have been conquered, has to be proved again and again by a corresponding behaviour and a new lifestyle, by breaking away from the neutrality of silence and abandoning any complicity with injustice, and by our struggle for the establishment of a just and fraternal world. "Only as we experience in some way the humiliation, rejection, abandonment, and defeat that come from taking up the cause of the poor and powerless against the principalities and powers of the established order can we await expectantly the emergence of life out of

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19 R. AVILA, *Worship and Politics*, New York, Orbis Books 1981, p. 47

20 *Ibid*

21 M. BONINO, *op.cit.*, p. 166.

death."<sup>22</sup> Faith and hope in the resurrection of Jesus should manifest itself in the celebration of the fullness of life—the cosmic Easter via death, by participating in the subversive activities and protesting practice of Jesus against the unjust structures and systems. It is by such responses that we act in companionship with the one who rose from the dead. "In this way we become witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus Christ who was tortured to death two thousand years ago, a person whom it proved impossible to kill."<sup>23</sup> Only by such responses do we prove that we have faith and hope in the resurrection, and only then we are Christians!

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22 R. SHAULL, *Heralds of a New Reformation*, New York: Orbis Books 1984, p. 54.

23 G. THERUKATTIL, *art.cit.*, p. 292

## Document

### Poverty and the Environment

*Final Document of The International Seminar on "Poverty and The Environment" held in Assisi on the occasion of the Awards Ceremony, October 23-25, 1991.*

Saint Francis and his followers, who were known for their practice of voluntary poverty which permitted them to establish harmonious relations with all creatures, inspires us to reflect on the relation of poverty to the environment. The Cantic of All Creatures, written by the Saint when he was blind, paradoxically reminds us that our eyes must be accustomed to gaze safely on created things, with wonder for the Creator and without injury to creatures.

It is generally maintained that poverty not only impedes social and human development but also prevents the proper use of those very natural resources which are necessary for that development. Lesser consensus exists on how to achieve a convergence between the twin objectives of environmental sustainability and economic development of which poverty alleviation should be the basis. Indeed, the interlinkages between poverty and environmental degradation are extremely difficult to unravel and are not always transparent. They vary from situation to situation.

We take note that the environment is being destroyed both by the unsustainable development in many regions and by the lack of development in many other geographical areas. In poor countries, resources are progressively degraded, thus undermining the means of livelihood of the people, trapping them in a cycle of increasing poverty and environmental deterioration.

The increase in the demands on the environment and natural resources by a growing population have drawn attention to demography as a factor in poverty. These demands by each individual in the industrialized societies are as much as 20 times greater than in



the poorer countries. It is these demands, and not merely the statistics of demography, that link environment, poverty and population growth. In this sense, the stress of population growth on the "carrying capacity" of planet Earth is a problem shared in common by all countries.

A new concept and a new practice of development is needed in which the richer countries will substantially reduce their own impact on the global environment, and which will at the same time enable the poorer countries to follow a development path which restores and enhances their own environment. An essential element of the new concept and practice is that it addresses as the most important priority the reduction of the inequity between rich and poor countries and peoples, and the elimination of absolute poverty everywhere.

It is immediately necessary to state that poverty is not the only cause of environmental damage. Other causes are economic interests, selfishness of individuals, consumerism, and exploitation by uncontrolled businesses.

### What is Poverty and Quality of Life?

To understand the relation of poverty to the environment, it is necessary to clarify the use of such words as *poverty*, *quality of life* and *environment*.

A distinction should be made, Destitution, deprivation or misery represent absolute poverty, that is, a form of involuntary material poverty, imposed by unjust economic and political structures. This type of poverty is unacceptable not only socially and ethically but also environmentally. It denies the human right to the *type of quality of life* described below. Deprivation, destitution or misery causes people to act unwisely and destructively of natural resources. Poverty may also indicate, however, a form of detachment from material goods, without suggesting the refusal to use them responsibly. It may be a commendable, voluntarily assumed lifestyle which is marked by a sense of austerity and equity. This detachment may be a necessary component of a sound philosophy of preserving resources and at the same time of using them sustainably. It could become the basis for those new lifestyles which tend to reduce superfluous and wasteful consumption and thus contribute to the reduction of environmental degradation and poverty in many parts of the world. Indeed, altruistic detachment from excessive material possessions can result in a certain austerity in one's own and in one's

children's standard of living. Indeed, we dare to suggest that voluntary poverty, understood as detachment, may be necessary as a responsible lifestyle to reduce, if not to check, our contemporary wastefulness and destruction of both renewable and nonrenewable resources and to redress the inequity between developed and developing countries. More and more people will have to understand that the excessive indulgence and materialism of the consumer society is destructive of the environment.

It is our understanding that *quality of life* refers "to every human being's accessibility to means and resources according to availability in space and time. *Quality of life* points to a dynamic reality which takes into consideration the capacity to satisfy the fundamental needs of food, health, housing and water supply, as well as access to education and to the means of the transmission of traditional or inherited wisdom, all of which imply the consciousness of the cultural identity of persons and communities and their ability to contribute to the solution of political, economical and social problems at the national, regional and global levels. The phrase also indicates a standard of dignified life for every human being, a standard which foresees peaceful competition and the common development of other human beings, in harmony with the biosphere and natural resources and in respect for the quality of life of future generations" (Pontifical Academy of Sciences, Study week on: Agriculture and the Quality of Life: New Global Trends, October 17-22, 1988, Documenta, 24, Pontifical Academy of Sciences, Vatican 1990, p. 12).

By *environment* we mean the relations of human beings within the dynamic processes of the following components: energy, atmosphere, soil, flora, fauna, and their hydrological and biogeochemical cycles.

### Causes of Poverty

Seen from a biological point of view, the human species has been exceedingly successful. The background of this success can be ascribed to the uniqueness of the human species. The cultural transmission of information from one generation to the next, as characteristic of the human species, is far more efficient and selective than the genetic evolution, on which the evolution of other species has had to rely. The cultural development of the human species has implied the foundation for scientific knowledge, which has enabled a decreased mortality rate. This in turn has resulted in the over-

coming of natural control mechanisms for population growth and a dramatic increase of human populations. In the long run, the production of food and other life-supporting commodities cannot keep up with this development. The demography of the human population is therefore of major importance when dealing with poverty and development in the world. It must however be emphasized that the relation between poverty and natural resources is complex and involves many other factors than population increase. "It is essential to state that demographic expansion is not simply a matter of statistics: it is a cultural and profoundly moral issue. Indeed, not all demographic expansion is incompatible with orderly development" (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 25). In fact, the natural resource today would, according to various calculations, be sufficient to support the present world population, provided there were a more equal distribution of goods. Although the growth of the world population will be a major problem for a long time to come, it should also be emphasized that a "demographic transition" has been observed, implying that the growth rate to more sustainable levels is occurring in industrialized countries, but also in parts of the Third World such as South Asia and parts of Latin America. The containment of this increase is an ethical and religious issue and it involves responsible parenthood.

According to the World Bank some 1.2 billion of the world's 5.4 billion people live in absolute poverty. Of these, some 500 million receive less than 80% of the UN-recommended minimum number of calories so that they are literally starving. More than one billion of individuals live on less than one dollar a day. The poorest one-fifth of the world's population shares less than 5% of the world's economic output. Since less than a quarter of the planet's human population uses approximately 85% of all capital resources, 80% of industrial energy, and comparable proportions of other resources, then obviously, serious global imbalances condition many particular situations for example, poor land management, unprecedented deforestation of tropical rain forests and waste disposal that are today endemic to the relationship poverty-environment. It is now clear that the western industrial model of development, with its high levels of mass consumption, is exerting excessively heavy pressure on the planetary environment, thus rendering difficult to achieve sustainability even for the 23% of the human population that lives in the richer countries. The steadily growing rift between the countries of the North and the South points to further deepening of poverty and environmental degradation.

The specific causes of poverty, understood as destitution, deprivation and misery, are therefore many. We believe that, since these forms of absolute poverty and environmental degradation begin in the behaviour of people, then it is in the minds and behaviour of people that the eradication of poverty and the protection of the environment must be constructed. The main foundation for such a radical change must therefore be ethical. Consensus is needed on a global ethic appropriate for the new age of worldwide responsibility emerging as a result of greater planetary interdependence. This ethic will be concerned with the imperative of working toward a sustainable and equitable world.

Destitution, deprivation or misery may be caused by international or national structures and situations or by persons themselves. Causes of this absolute poverty are often specific and can be differentiated according to geographical areas, climate, access to resources, political conditions (for example, socio-political imbalances or military conflicts), lack of social and economic infrastructures (for example, inadequate educational and professional training or earning power), and so on. A combination of these causes has created various forms of poverty in some of the most affluent countries in the world, a situation unexpected up to the recent past. In general, the young and the elderly find themselves on the margins of opulent societies that are wasteful of human and natural resources.

Other well-known causes of absolute poverty should be mentioned. Although the flow of capital and trade may be in the process of tying various countries more closely together, there are severe imbalances so that at present the net flow goes from the poorer to the richer countries. This takes place without sufficient and effective consideration being given to environmental protection.

The external debt and the subsidization and protectionist policies and incentives of major producers of agricultural commodities impede the equitable transfer of labour forces, the acquisition of development capital, and the just exchange of goods.

Wars and political instability also make sustainable development impossible in many parts of the world because of their negative and complex effects on the infrastructures of society, social relationships, the economy and the environment. Wars can also displace large populations into areas unfamiliar to them.

The lack of educational opportunities excludes solutions to the multiple problems that human beings must face in seeking more harmonious relations within their environment. One can say that, in

many instances, beyond natural disaster, human causes destroy resources and undermine development.

Finally, the prospect of tidal waves of environmental refugees, driven from their homelands by rising sea levels, desertification, soil erosion, and the increased frequency of droughts, floods, and tropical storms caused by climate change, is increasing the possibility that a vicious circle be created of greater imbalances in the relationship poverty-environment.

### **International Cooperation as a Solution**

In a increasingly interdependent world, it is our belief that the solution to the imbalances existing in the relationship poverty-environment must be sought in a spirit of growing cooperation between nations, institutions and people themselves. The solidarity of all countries in international economic and environmental protection policies is necessary. It is, however, equally important that people, especially those who are high consumers, become more personally conscious of their role in the predicament in which humankind finds itself today and which could become more serious in the near future. They must realize that there is a link between personal behaviour, responsibility, and global inequity and environmental deterioration.

If cooperation among peoples and countries is to be achieved, then development, understood in its fullest human sense, must imply solutions that transcend merely economic considerations. On the other hand, no solution can be offered without radical economic reform in certain countries and especially internationally.

To achieve an effective form of world cooperation, attitudes which define each individual's relationship with self, with neighbour, with the remotest human communities, and with nature itself must be changed. A more strongly developed sense of interdependence among individuals and nations must be educationally inculcated and practically developed. Indeed, it is clearly apparent that the world is entering an entirely new era of global interdependence.

The right to a safe environment must be guaranteed to all human beings. With this in mind, such a right should be included in the proposed Earth Charter as well as a subsequently amended version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

It has become clear that an ordered universe as a common heritage requires a more internationally coordinated approach to the

management of the earth's goods. In many cases the effects of ecological problems transcend the borders of individual states. The solution, therefore, cannot be found exclusively at the national level. Although existing mechanisms and bodies are clearly not adequate for the development of a comprehensive plan of action, political obstacles, forms of exaggerated nationalism and economic interests must be overcome to create international cooperation and long-term effective action. The role of a global system of regional networks for analysis, research and education merits exploration as a way to develop regional policy options in a global framework while preserving cultural diversity.

Joint action on the international level should not be considered to lessen the responsibility of individual states. Indeed, each state should actively endeavour within its own territory to prevent destruction of the biosphere for the good of all.

Although the right to private property is a natural characteristic of every man and woman, and although it is fundamental for every person's autonomy and development, the possession of material goods is nevertheless not an absolute right and its limits are inscribed in its very nature as a human right. The use of goods, while marked by freedom, is subordinated to their original common destination for the benefit of all. Consequently, fundamental natural goods, or the so-called *commons*, belong to all inhabitants of the earth, even prior to any considerations of distributive justice. Thus, although the right to private property remains valid and necessary, it does not nullify the principle that the natural endowment of this earth is for the benefit of all humanity.

It is urgent to develop a more participatory responsibility towards the common good in order to overcome exploitative and destructive relations to natural resources.

### Education and Communications

To overcome the negative consequences of deprivation on the environment, education is essential for the immediate solution to certain forms of environmental destruction.

Although a variety of legal, economic, scientific and technical solutions must be proposed to resolve the imbalances inherent in the poverty-environment relationship, it is also clear that all these measures will be insufficient unless they are perceived in terms of self-interest and dedication to the common good of all peoples. In other words, all proposed or implemented solutions must express

and achieve a set of values and preferences that are accepted by society as a whole. In fact, before new laws, new economics, and new technologies can be created and effectively deployed, it is necessary that humans be imbued with a new awareness and new attitudes so that they live according to new behavioural patterns. Change can be introduced through a long series of small and discrete, but correct, actions by each man, woman and child.

The communications media are wonderful instruments at man's disposal for building closer and more enlightened relationships between individuals and throughout the human family. In as much as the mass media has become the chief source of information and education in our modern world, and of guidance and inspiration at the level of individual, family and social behaviour, then it must offer information which is full, consistent, accurate and true.

The mass media should therefore give coverage to human and environmental problems, and especially to those faced by developing countries. It should present those situations with responsibility fostering a sense of participation and an awareness of the unity of the entire human family.

In analyzing the relation of absolute poverty to the environment, the mass media should elicit in every human being an effective desire to seek solutions to causes of the problems presented by that relationship. People should be educated to overcome a vague sense of participation and become actively involved.

The solution to recurrent environmental problems in some parts of the world depends on the effective use of the mass media, and particularly television, to instill more appropriate and adequate agricultural practices. Such use of the mass media also helps to alleviate deprivation and misery by teaching sound protection and use of resources (cf. Pontifical Academy of Sciences, *op.cit.*, p.25).

Education and extension services for the enhancement of agricultural practices must be strengthened in different parts of the world. Furthermore, the disorderly urbanization in developing countries must be stemmed or even reversed through education and improved rural conditions.

The protection of tropical rain forests and of their biodiversity is one of the most urgent issues of our day. At times, these ecosystems can be integrated into economic and social development schemes without damage to them and of great benefit to humankind. The biodiversity of tropical forests is valuable not only aesthetically but also medicinally and even economically. The recent agreement be

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ween the National Biodiversity Institute of Costa Rica and a pharmaceutical company is a good example of such development integration.

## Achievements

Steps are being taken to reduce the inefficient use of sources of energy in developed countries, to eliminate and recycle dangerous industrial waste products, to control, if not eliminate, transnational traffic of such materials, and to allow for the sustainable development and industrialization of developing countries. Greater attention must still be paid to the impact of new technological or scientific advances on the natural environment and to the monitoring of such effects for the good of all peoples. International agreements and monitoring in this area must therefore be rendered more effective and binding. The introduction of dangerous and harmful technologies and of waste materials into developing countries must be avoided.

The reduction and, in some cases, the elimination of military expenditures, should lead to greater human and capital investment in the area of better programmed sustainable development and of environmental protection. The case of Costa Rica, which abolished its army in 1949, is a good example of what can be achieved with such measures in a spirit congruent with the best cultural and political values of a nation. Not only its impressive system of national parks but also its National Institute of Biodiversity have contributed to international knowledge. Its program of ecotourism is an example for other countries of sustainable development with the least damage to natural resources.

The solutions to rural poverty and environmental degradation require greater attention to the environmental constraints facing the poor. Institutional, technological and policy aspects of the problem must be taken into consideration. Furthermore, it must be kept in mind that, for the rural poor, the basic desire to survive often takes precedence over the will to conserve the environment. To be effective, conservation activities must therefore be reconciled with present production rates and technologies which combine short-term gains with long-term sustainability. Pecuniary and institutional incentives should be used more effectively to achieve desired goals. Deforestation in many countries has been supported by financial incentives, which have often promoted the destruction of forests and other natural resources. It is urged that such incentives be abol-



ished to promote sustainability throughout the world.

Human alterations of the environment often result in desertification and in the formation of other impediments. This development is not always irreversible, but can be rectified in many cases. Attempts to do so, and efforts to perform scientific research to achieve this goal, should be encouraged.

Although agrarian reforms have not always produced the desired solutions, they are, however, necessary and are being introduced in parts of Eastern Europe. They should also be introduced where unused lands possessed by affluent few or by conglomerates could be made available to small farmers. If necessary, this should be brought about even through foreign aid (cf. Pontifical Academy of Sciences, *op.cit.*, p. 29).

Scientific research and technical applications are and will be necessary to correct imbalances in the poverty-environment relationship. All efforts, however, must be made to avoid the creation of monopolies which would limit the exchange of knowledge and raise the costs of technologies necessary to protect the environment in developing countries. More scientific research and technology must be oriented to the solution of environmental problems in developing countries than is the case today. Special attention should be given to the development of self-reliance in scientific research.

Although knowledge of the earth's biodiversity is increasing and improving, much remains to be done. *Parataxonomists*, as lay persons of rural extraction, should be trained to help gather information and biological specimens for cataloging, inventory and conservation purposes. Parataxonomists become focal points for the dissemination of information in their own rural communities.

Of the approximately 55 million deaths in the world every year, at least one-third 90% of them being children under four years of age result from starvation, malnutrition and insufficient hygienic conditions. Although much is being done to improve nutritional standards and hygiene in developing countries, much more remains still to be done.

Undeniably international aid is more and more harmonized with the needs and cultural situations of the people who benefit from it. A new form of interaction between science, technology and economics, on the one hand, and society, culture and ethics, on the other, must be created. More attention should, therefore, be paid to the creation of infrastructures which will be able to extend the benefits of aid to greater numbers of people in developing countries without

disturbing their cultural values.

Debt-for-nature swaps should be understood as forms of international solidarity and cooperation in all efforts to reduce or eliminate external debts which cause human suffering and environmental damage. Indeed, the external debt cannot be repaid by increasing the financial and social burdens of the poor. The search for solutions to the debt problem must be fearless, decisive and courageous, keeping in mind, however, that "the populations more directly affected by the consequences of the debt crisis need visible signs in order to recognize the equity and effectiveness of the solutions adopted. Confidence, which is a necessary element in generating a national consensus in accepting a fair distribution of sacrifices, and thereby assuring the successful outcome of adjustment measures, is not the result of economic measures alone. It is only granted if impartiality and the service of others emerge as the motives behind decisions, as opposed to the interests of one nation or social category" (Pontifical Commission "Justitia et Pax," *At the Service of the Human Community: An Ethical Approach to the International Debt Question*, Pontifical Commission "Justitia et Pax," Vatican 1986, p. 29).

Thus, the alleviation of poverty in developing countries is a prerequisite of good environmental management and of the protection of the earth's biotic wealth. Only the quality of life that we have suggested above can help eliminate the imbalances inherent in the relationship poverty-environment.

### Ethical Principles

Societal goals need to be recast in terms of human values, with a firm focus on principles of justice and peace.

In defining the relation of the person to the environment, understood as a common good, all forms of individualism and collectivism should be avoided. A more participatory and personal responsibility toward the so-called commons should be developed in order to overcome destructive relations with life-sustaining resources. Rights to a healthy and life-sustaining environment should be defined in terms of personal duties and responsibilities toward the common good.

If it is to be realistic and not an abstract code of human behaviour, an ethics of relations within the environment must be rooted in the cultural forms that already exist, correcting unsound practices and potentiating those that have proven themselves ecologically acceptable. Only by respecting the uniqueness of persons, communi-

ties and cultures can this be achieved. National conservation strategies for sustainable development should be developed and implemented with justice for all.

Women bear a disproportionate share of the burdens of poverty, and often are relegated to weak and powerless societal positions. Strong efforts must be made to empower women, to encourage their full intellectual and spiritual development, and to allow them to assume more equal and appropriate roles in all societies. the full participation of women in the alleviation of poverty and the improvement of the human environment is essential.

Peoples have the right to retain their respective cultural identities.

Institutional structures should be reshaped according to a personalistic understanding of an individual's relation to the environment. New models of education should therefore be rooted in a profoundly humanistic vision of life and of harmonious relations in the biosphere. In the light of this, education should prepare the young to assess critically the pursuit of the immediate satisfaction of material needs.

In an interdependent world of limited resources, there should be instilled in every person a sense of detachment from those material goods which are not absolutely necessary for the attainment of the quality of life defined above. This type of humanistic orientation is especially necessary in the affluent parts of the world. Only a sincere effort to overcome egoism and self-seeking will allow humankind to develop equitable programs of sustainable development.

Sincerity and clarity must pervade the formulation of long-term economic goals and the definition of step-by-step concrete actions to reach them. Scientists, technicians and economists should aim to combine principles of ethics with research, analyses, applications and policies.

Scientific and technological innovations must be compatible with human rights and with cultural values. Choices in favor of those rights and values and of social justice and authentic human development should be made at all levels of decision-making. While concurrently facing the problems of poverty and underdevelopment, we must promote the growth of societies whose ethical and moral values are deeply rooted in a profound respect for nature and the wise use of its biological resources.

Keeping the above principles in mind, it is opportune to affirm

decisively and firmly, that it is necessary to go beyond the current "emergency mentality" and to develop a culture which will foresee and prevent ecological damage. This is a fundamental function of those who govern. What our decisions and recommendations for the global environment hope to achieve is not the denial of consistent development and the consequent well-being, but rather the affirmation of the need to render all development more systemic.

### An Appeal in the Name of Saint Francis

Saint Francis, convinced that God expresses his will through all his works, was submissive to creatures and scanned creation attentively, listening to its mysterious voices and to its mute language. In praising the virtue of Holy Obedience, that is, absolute submission to God, he wrote that it "subjects a man to everyone on earth, and not only to men, but to all the beasts as well and to the wild animals, so that they can do what they like with him, as far as God allows them" (*The Praises of the Virtues*).

Francis' love of poverty as a radical form of detachment from material possessions permitted every creature to be true to its structure and nature within the dynamic processes of the biosphere.

All creatures are our brothers and sisters because they share with us a common origin and destiny. They are the Creator's gifts and signs of his providential love.

Inspired by St Francis' ideals, one of his greatest followers, St Bonaventure, could write: "Open your eyes...; alert the ears of your spirit, unlock your lips, and apply your heart that you may see, hear, praise, love, and adore, magnify, and honour your God in every creature, lest perchance the entire universe rise against you. For because of this, the whole world shall fight against the unwise" (*Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, I, 15).

To overcome the imbalances which pervade the relationship poverty-environment, many problems must be solved, linked, among other things, to the commitments of international financial institutions, to the price of resources and to new trade and tariff agreements. May the solution to these problems be inspired by the ideals of the Saint who was known as the Little Poor Man of Assisi.

# Basic Education for All

## A Challenge to Catholic Schools

Archbishop Angelo FERNANDES

The retired Archbishop of Delhi delivered recently in Rome the following address to the Board Meeting of the International Catholic Education Organisation (OIEC) of which he is the President. He puts forward as an ideal to be adopted by the educational network of the Church a commitment towards a universal basic education through various forms of outreach programmes, such as some schools are already engaged in, with much fruit. The recent limited but real successes in India in arriving at complete literacy in some districts shows that the ideal, which goes beyond the mere concept of literacy, can be achieved with the cooperation of all.

**F**igures and statistics tend to leave us cold and unmoved for instance when we are told that in the densely populated areas of the world, notably in Asia, there are about 700 million totally illiterate, or in Africa 54% of the population, of whom 65% are women, cannot read and that, if we add the functionally illiterate of the industrialized countries of Europe, U.S.A., Canada, etc., the figure would be around one billion or about a quarter of humanity!<sup>1</sup> This picture of world illiteracy coincides with that of world poverty. These are the same people who lack medical facilities and live in very insanitary conditions. Illiteracy is only one form of the marginalization of vast hordes of human beings, and therefore we have to see the whole problem of illiteracy within a wider social context than that of reading, writing and arithmetic.

## The State of the World's Children

About 100 million children abandoned by their families are condemned to a precarious existence especially in the greater cities of the world. They subsist on back-breaking labour or through petty

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1. Sylvain LOURIE, *The UNESCO Courier*, July 1990 p. 13.

crime, prostitution or begging. Eighty-eight million children, states ILO, are forced to work in unsafe and insanitary conditions. One hundred and twenty million children between the age of 6 to 11 are denied access to school. Thirty millions in the Third World are street children and 10 million live in refugee camps. More than 3 million die every year of diseases which are preventable and curable. Infant mortality is still rampant.<sup>2</sup>

In graphic terms every day 7000 children die of diarrhoeal dehydration; every day 800 children die of measles, whooping cough and tetanus; every day 6000 children die of pneumonia; every day about 40,000 children under the age of five die in developing countries, largely from preventable diseases. If properly informed and properly supported, parents and families could save two thirds of the 14 million children who die every year!<sup>3</sup> The foundations on which the world will have to build in the 21st century are weak and subject to continued erosion. It is not a legacy we can be proud of.

The World Conference on "Education for All" at Jomtien, Thailand in March 1990 was convened to respond to this challenge. It is recognized today that the lack of basic education in a significant percentage of the population prevents societies from addressing with strength and purpose the daunting problems listed above, besides violence and strife and problems stemming from widespread environmental degradation and imbalances, and injustice in the economic and social fields<sup>4</sup> If adequate measures are not taken for the spread of education the chasm of economic disabilities will widen further, resulting in the building up of disintegrative forces. Education is the only instrument for peaceful social change. *Access to education is the primary condition for effective participation in the life of the modern world.* Both UNESCO and UNICEF recognize the impact of economic and financial problems on education systems as well as the place for conceptual, ethical and moral values in education itself. New initiatives like the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child can also be utilized to bring the *force of law* to bear on education for all. So too the International Development Strategy for the 4th U.N. Development Decade. Hopefully every literacy action

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2. *Press Release*, United Nations, Deptt. of Public Information, New York, 26th January 1990.

3. *Ibid.*, p.2, Statement by Under Secretary General.

4. "Preamble," *World Declaration on Education for All*.

will be linked to a development objective, and educative action will not be limited only to young pupils but extend to adults and drop-outs - youngsters who have left school much too soon.

## Basic Education for All

For the first time in the development debate of the last three decades "*Education*" and "*Children*" have come to receive pointed attention. Witness the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Jomtien World Conference on "Education for All" convened by four leading world organisations, and the Summit Meeting of the Heads of State and Government who met in New York in September 1990 to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Consequently "*Education*" has been raised to a higher position also on the scale of financial priorities.<sup>5</sup> This is a sign of hope and opens up vistas of great things in store for our children everywhere if there are concerned people to undertake the follow-up in right earnest. The deputy Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia even gave a moral message at the Jomtien assembly: "Education is not simply a means of material development; it is, first and foremost, at the service of the development of culture, man and *relations between peoples*. We must strive to form a 21st century man so that he will be enamoured of freedom and peace, knowledge and reflection, faith, hope and love." The call for focusing on the welfare of *children worldwide* and the thousands who are at the service of the world's children, are signs of an *international social pressure* to give greater attention to education, to the welfare of children and to the organisation of the means of education. A generation ago Arnold Toynbee declared: "Our age is the first generation since the dawn of history in which mankind dared to believe it practical to make the benefits of civilization available to the whole human race." Is not the focus on "children" and "education" a step forward in that direction? There are new forces at work, a new set of conditions affecting the world's children and a new consciousness about those conditions and our capacity to change them.

For the first time in history the goal of basic education for all was seen as *an attainable goal*. Children, youth and adults must be given an opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning. All educational disparities are to be removed and the following are listed as underserved groups: the poor, street and working children; rural and remote populations; nomads and mi-

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5 O.I.E.C. Bulletin, no.108, March-April 1990, p.6.

grant workers; indigenous peoples; ethnic, racial and linguistic minorities; refugees; those displaced by war; people under occupation; the disabled.<sup>6</sup> What is envisaged is not enrolment of all the above into the existing school system but within a broad understanding of basic education, providing opportunities through which *they actually learn* relevant knowledge, especially vocational skills in terms of their work, values and attitudes. These acceptable levels of learning acquisition must be defined in the programmes made to meet the challenge. And since learning does not take place in isolation, basic education programmes should be holistic and include basic language competence oral and/or written; skills in basic numeracy; nutrition and environmental sanitation; and general physical and emotional support to situate oneself among one's people and within the nation. A variety of modules would give learners freedom of choice.

The support of family and community environments should also be related to the content and process of the operation.<sup>7</sup> The use of audio and possibly video cassettes would help, since many experience reading disability. This is a fresh challenge to educators who are creative and innovative and recognize the immense value of the media.

Nor must it be forgotten that many illiterate adults have an *oral cultural heritage* which means a lot to them and which has shaped their perceptions and the language in which they think. They also have had *plenty of experiences* at home, at work, at places of worship and entertainment, which have given meaning to their lives even while contributing to their language learning all through life.<sup>8</sup> The non-formal learning programmes envisaged must help people to understand *real life problems* and give more meaning to their lives; otherwise they will be resisted and prove a failure. Starting "from the learner," whether individual or group, the programmes must create an awareness of the "closed" universe in which they move with all its disharmonies and generate the desire and interest to acquire new meanings and relationships in life. The target group should be involved in formulating the programmes. This should be linked with their work. The animator should make them aware that once functionally literate the quality of their life can be improved

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6. "Preamble," *World Declaration on Education for All*.

7. *Ibid*

8. Raja ROY-SINGH, *The UNESCO Courier*, July 1990, p.21.



and productivity can be increased. He or she must bring about self-realization, inform, raise curiosity, provoke thinking, instead of just teaching the alphabet.

### Reading the Signs of the times

The signs of the times are the "inspirations" developed in the hearts of people thanks to the changes in many fields. It is the Church's duty to interpret them in the light of the Gospel. The Word of God is always incarnate and takes flesh in the anxieties, conflicts, questionings, aspirations, challenges of the incarnate reality and because it takes flesh in this confusion, we have to purify, scrutinize and interpret it in the light of the Gospel. This has to be done by all together. Pope John XXIII adverted to these signs in his letter convoking the Second Vatican Council as also in his opening address. He says that in the present order of things *Divine Providence is leading us to a new order, a new era of human relationships*. This is very human and yet it is very Christian and in fact the real mission of the Church: to cooperate in the Spirit in building the Kingdom with the power of the Gospel; a society of brothers and sisters where justice, peace, love, holiness and truth can reign supreme.

### The Challenging Task before OIEC

Who would venture to call in question the *immense significance* of the universal concerted efforts that have taken place for the welfare of the world's children and their basic education and with them of the disadvantaged early school drop-outs and the adults who never had an opportunity? "Humanity" is defined in terms of human "needs" whose actualisation constitutes authentic happiness, the true goal of life. The key to the correct understanding of and respect for the rights of children is rooted in the unambiguous recognition of their human nature. At the heart of any ethical discussion is a concern for human dignity. Wherever there is any discrimination against any human being there is no belief in human dignity. And human dignity is antecedent to and the basis for rights and duties. The recognition of the crucial basic human needs of children and the families of the deprived has recently received a fresh consciousness with serious implications for all of us. A new common and *universal human responsibility* has therefore emerged and must be integrated into the dynamics of international relations and trade.

Coming nearer home, the hopes raised and the aspirations enkindled certainly qualify as signs of the times knocking at the door of OIEC. This is both because OIEC belongs to the Catholic Church and because of its consultative status with the U.N. agencies active in the field of education as well as with intergovernmental regional organisations in Europe, Africa and the new world. Asia has to figure more if OIEC is to become truly a "world" organisation.

Responsible for 40 million pupils in 240,000 Catholic schools OIEC gathers together some 200 million people who collaborate in this essential work of education, touching an important fraction of the youth of our time.<sup>9</sup> What an opportunity and yet what a responsibility to take up the challenge before us with grit and determination and open a new chapter with a great social thrust in the life and dynamics of the OIEC of the future!

*The Church has a teaching mission*, and a universal one at that. The signs of the times are a challenge to the Church's teaching mission and the ideals of the new era for justice and peace for respect and tolerance, for freedom, equality and solidarity. This is very much in line with OIEC's thirteenth General Assembly theme, "*Education for Freedom and Love*." The Catholic school is a "*school of development*," which is "open to and integrated into the environment and striving for the development of every person and the whole person." In the words of Pope John Paul II this means "education for fullness of being."

*The Church's universal mission to bring the Good News* to all finds a practical platform when it addresses the basic needs of countless millions of the disinherited who are weak in the basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy, useful knowledge and basic human values and attitudes, all of which are essential for healthy and wholesome participation in the life of the community.

There are moments in history when a new direction has to be given to an age-old process. That moment is today.<sup>10</sup> Education is essentially for all. This is fundamental to all-round development material and spiritual. *Basic education for all is now considered an attainable goal. OIEC and its network of schools can ill afford to ignore the summons.*

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9. O.I.E.C. Explanatory Note, 15th October 1989.

10. *Challenge of Education*, Ministry of Education, Govt. of India, 1985,

## Services that OIEC Could Render

First and foremost, the findings of the three world meetings on "children" should be made available in palatable form, as a sort of "education in the signs of the times" or "education to reality." Perhaps succinct summaries highlighting the *main thrusts and the social dimension* might be the answer. Unless our vision grows, our decisions and current behaviour patterns will not be evaluated nor will any significant changes follow. We will continue to think and act as prestigious institutions unrelated to the lives of many of our sisters and brothers in the area! The recent historic developments that have focussed on "children" and their needs, growth and development, must be seen as the *central task of the nineties*.

Secondly this call of the nineties should filter down in the form of a "vision" which is presented to Catholic schools of a country. "A Pastoral Plan for Catholic Schools in India" published by the Commission for Education and Culture of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India illustrates the lines on which this might be done. It includes challenges facing Catholic schools, their fundamental thrusts and some practical guidelines and suggestions.

Moreover, since the plan of action envisages a follow-up through national governments, OIEC should urge its National Catholic Education Directors to play an active role in the national partnerships, both with a view to education for all, and to act as catalysts for information and perhaps even channeling available funds for the outreach programmes being set up<sup>11</sup>.

Should not every Catholic school, as a matter of conscience, study the challenge in depth and look for ways and means to reach out to more than the pupils on its rolls? They are out there waiting for us to come to them, God's children of predilection, the poor and lowly who exist everywhere and probably in the neighbourhood of every school, namely one of the several categories of people listed above in the section on *Basic Education for All*. Will we just ignore the cry for help and wait for some good Samaritan to come to their rescue?

Fr Michel's comments in the OIEC Bulletin no. 108 are very much along these lines: From now on we can no longer remain locked in a rarefied intellectualism. The field of education's tasks has been newly marked out from childhood to adulthood, encom-

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11. Father Jean-Claude MICHEL, S.J. "Technical Report of the OIEC representative," *O.I.E.C. Bulletin* 108, March-April 1990, p. 8.

passing society as a whole and heralding an uninterrupted process. so it is useless to cling to school formulas and certificates alone when we must recognise the importance of a *societal educational climate* and promote a *society without frontiers*. *Education is at the service of a new era* and receives its credentials in reference to every human being's Right to Education<sup>12</sup>.

This sounds almost like a *Manifesto of the OIEC* for the next decade. It should give a further impetus to the movement hopefully launched by the Catholic school network to extend "basic education" to the disadvantaged of the world.

### Some Meaningful Happenings

There is an "Each One Teach One" project being fostered by teachers and children in some Catholic schools in India, as part of the National Literacy Mission. And to make the scheme really effective, *training camps for teachers are being organised* by the All India Association of Catholic Schools around the parameters of "basic education" for those sought to be helped in slum neighbourhoods near school or home. Several studies have shown that literacy is related to productivity, better health, nutrition awareness and improved participation of children in primary-education. Students are briefed, motivated, oriented and taught by the trained teachers to use kits and identify their learners near their homes or schools. Other volunteers teachers, parents and others also join in. In India an effort is also being made to link mass literacy programmes with the *National Open School* so that those reached have scope for continuing education either by joining the formal system or enrolling with the *Open University*. Some schools have already established *learning support study centres accredited* to the National Open School. There are 43 in Delhi alone and more than a hundred in the country. Such partnerships are mutually strengthening and enriching and jointly contribute to the uplift of the poor. Indirectly *education through open learning* is expected to help revitalize the formal system, a long-desired and much overdue structural change. At present the National Open School has 160,000 students on its rolls and more are seeking admission.

As a facilitating rather than a funding agency, the National Open School envisages a very large number of partner institutions carefully selected for their commitment to common aims and purposes.

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12. *Ibid.* "The OIEC looks at Jomtien," p.2.

There will be a *Consortium Approach* for ready sharing of materials, methodologies and management practices for mutual benefit and better service to the beneficiaries, mainly "second chance" groups, a multitude of young adults and those interested in continuing education. The challenge is to make "Distance Education" both attractive and relevant.

Besides teachers training, programmes of a similar nature could be organised for Principals and others responsible for the management, smooth functioning and growth of the concerned institutions. When decision makers catch up with the new vision and the new demands, the chances of enlightened action are better.

Attitudinal changes in teachers and managers are a prerequisite to bring about any qualitative change in our institutions. One religious congregation is animating all its ten schools in a big metropolis to move in the direction of "basic education for all." What a boon it would be if others followed suit!

*The finances involved* for outreach programmes is not likely to be beyond the possibilities of our schools. However, when this happens to be so, such extension services which contribute to "development" could receive ready assistance from "Misereor" through the Indo-German Social Service Society based in New Delhi.

Encouraging such "developmental projects" in all countries, OIEC itself might gain additional credibility and indirectly attract a measure of financial support for its administrative expenses. Catholic development agencies exist in all countries and might rally round in support of a scheme that helps to put "disadvantaged people" on their feet through the school system which, hopefully, can be relied upon to add values and attitudes to the social service rendered.

## The Impact of Success Stories

Success stories best illustrate how the challenge can be met and is being met.

The *St Francis de Sales School in Janakpuri, New Delhi* uses its premises in the afternoon for 346 children of the poorest families in the neighbourhood for a Hindi medium school. The pupils pay a nominal fee. The operation is supported by the English-medium school. An important feature is that boys and girls of the 9th standard onwards help in tutoring the village children who attend. Students of the middle school stage street plays in the villages around as a regular feature and quite successfully introduce value educa-

tion. For the children of the Hindi medium school of the 8th standard who are finding the going hard, a centre of the National Open School has been established. Some of the children have enlisted and with them about twelve hundred school dropouts and others of the surrounding community are taking full advantage of this blessing. Yet another outreach programme is to the villages around where basic reading, writing, numeracy, some basic skills, values and attitudes are imparted which help the beneficiaries to take their place in the community.

Another exemplary school of this type is *Loreto Girls School, Sealdah, Calcutta*. Of the 1300 pupils, 800 are very poor ones from the slums. The entire school from the 5th standard upwards, 150 of them at a time, makes a weekly bus trip to the rural schools in the area. The girls take charge classwise and conduct the environmental programme of the village school. The better-off children and the children of the slums are jointly engaged in this programme for their weaker sisters and brothers with whom they relate easily and comfortably. Another outreach is to the "pavement dwellers" who come to the school when they can, for as long as they can stay, and are in a sense, part of the school. Since these children are working to earn a living and contribute to the meagre income of the family they can only come whenever they happen to be free. Regular students are their teachers. They come from their "work education classes" to coach them on a one-to-one basis. The "*Rainbow Children*" project is doing well and doing good also to their "child teachers" training them to responsibility, developing what is known as "positive interdependence."

A branch of the National Open School is available for those who need to switch gears. About 40 girls are currently with it. They can go right through and even join the Open University. A further notable service is *Teacher Training Programmes* for those who cannot get admission elsewhere for whatever reason.

These and other such experiences which have proved successful and there are many should be circulated to the OIEC constituency. Knowledge of experiences which have proved successful can be a strong motivating force for trying to do in like manner. Such sharing would enhance the image of OIEC as doing a distinctive service to its member schools. Doubtless, there are other success stories in other parameters of education but for the next few years it is such "*social justice stories*" coming out of our Catholic schools that need to make the rounds.

## Implications for the Catholic Schools Network

What all the above amounts to is launching a campaign to shift the focus from school system to "children in school and neighbourhood" as being the thrust of the Catholic school of the nineties. *The school should be seen as the principal vehicle for achieving universalisation.* It should perform not merely for those children who attend but also for those who remain out.

Moreover, isn't it time we stopped treating children as "objects" and recognized them as "subjects" and agents responsible for their own growth, progress and destiny? Isn't it education's role to bring out the best in the pupils, train them for "responsible" living, "students" who will continue their life-long education in a Learning Society, with a social conscience that keeps them "restless" till they have found ways and means of bringing to their less fortunate sisters and brothers at least some of the benefits that they have received, even through non-formal learning, the Open School and in other ways?

By the same token, can "the children" of the school be motivated and made 'responsible' for the outreach to the children and people of the neighbourhood? Children are gifted and generous and they are well equipped to meet the challenge. "Peer teaching" has been known to achieve great results in positive interdependence. Teachers trained on the job or in special courses could ensure the success of the programme. Encourage bigger children and train them by word and example to feel responsible for their less fortunate sisters and brothers and they will lead us to greater love, compassion and practical concern for the large numbers that surround them in school or at home. What a real education that would be for them as they grow in positive interdependence!

I feel certain also that if our children knew that 40,000 young children die every day for the simple reason that 'low-cost health solutions' have not been brought to them and their families, they would want to include in their outreach package such information as immunisation, the simple sugar, salt and water remedy for diarrhoea that is the world's single biggest killer of children, etc. UNICEF has been spearheading this virtual revolution and in 1989 alone the lives of three million children were thereby saved. One hundred million could be saved in this decade if there is popular and political will to make this happen. Children could create public opinion on this score. Children's power could thereby become the harbinger for a better tomorrow! In the Lord's name let us rally them in hope

and joy for a great adventure.

## Education and Social Concern

Education worthy of the name cannot be confined to training for individual betterment, for personal achievement, for excelling in competitive examinations. It must perforce include education for the common good, for social responsibility, for the gospel of social service and for social change. Man is complete only when he is making something other than himself. All living is making and the aim of education, therefore, is to produce men and women who will think of life as a whole, of all life, personal and social alike, as something to be created by their efforts. Martin Luther King described the process as follows: "No man has learned to live until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity. *In order to live creatively and meaningfully our self-concern must be wedded to other-concern.*"

To expect this to happen in later life on the basis of theoretical principles given in schools does not seem realistic. The work experience envisaged in "Basic Education for All" as outlined above will bring the reality of the country and/or the world into the school and that reality is poverty, indignity and inequality. We owe it to the Gospel, to the poor of the world and to education itself to evaluate our school system from the standpoint of this socio-educational focus. It seems the most rational approach to the trials of deprivation. We cannot be true witnesses of God's love unless a firm decision is taken to reorient our schools towards the promotion of justice. That is the primary task clamouring for attention in this last decade of the century and "Basic Education for All" is one practical way of addressing ourselves to the question.

## Conclusion

Through its schools, colleges, technical and training institutions the Church has made a significant contribution to the cause of education in the world. "By their commitment, the Catholic Schools have proved," says Prof. Satya Bhushan, "that most of the constraints standing in the way of literacy can be efficiently handled by Voluntary Agencies." The determination of Catholic schools at this time to involve themselves in the holistic mass literacy programme has provided a fresh "ray of hope." It is also a practical and powerful medium to enlighten the consciences of large numbers with the gospel message of love and brotherhood.



Tito Simonelli wrote from Rio de Janeiro recently in *TIME* magazine:

*"I notice them every day on the street  
these children without hope.  
But my horror gave way to shame,  
then guilt and now pity.  
Soon I'll be immune.  
When will my heart roar  
with compassionate rage  
and wrench me from my apathy?  
We cannot pretend these children  
are somebody else's problem  
What right have we to expect  
that some unfeeling government agency  
will perform a miracle  
if we are incapable of reaching out  
to one suffering child?"*

"The ambition of the greatest man of our generation has been to wipe every tear from every eye. That may be beyond us, but as long as there are tears and suffering, so long our work will not be over".<sup>13</sup>

In the final decade of this millenium we may ask what more precious legacy could be left to the 21st century than the health and well-being of those people who will comprise the societies of the future that is, the children of today.<sup>14</sup>

The haunting refrain of Christopher Coelho's "Cry of the Child" reveals the depths from which anguished children call to us today.

*My cry is for freedom, my tears are for space,  
O give me the space where to grow and to be,  
For all I ask is to look in your face,  
And see there a glow of the flame that is me!*

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13. Pandit Jawaharlal NEHRU, *India's Independence Day Speech*, 14th August 1947.

14. James GRANT Address to WCRP's Conference, "The World's Religions for the World's Children," Princeton, 25th July 1990.

## Forum

# Ashrams, Theologizing, Inculturation

Ignatius HIRUDAYAM, S.J.\*

**T**he Festschrift in honour of Samuel Rayan *Bread and Breath*, edited by T.K. John contains contributions from eminent scholars. In Part II: "Theology for Tomorrow," the first and solid paper is "Theology in the Third World: Reflections from El Salvador" by Jon Sobrino. While fully appreciating its contents for Latin America, and though I have been moved by his later writing after the tragedy of his Jesuit Community, I feel I must emphasize the affirmation of John B. Chettimattam (in the same publication, p. 181). This is what Chettimattam affirms: "It has now become abundantly clear that one cannot transplant the Liberation Theology of Latin America in the Indian soil. Even the ideal of liberation from poverty and oppression has to be expressed in and through the deeper Indian religious experience." Aloy Pieris does so for the Buddhist societies.

The second paper is "From Alienation to Inculturation: Some Reflections on Doing Theology in India Today" by George M. Soares-Prabhu. A scholar of immense erudition and profound insight, in this article, unfortunately, he makes several statements which really must challenge many readers. He begins by stating the truth that "to do theology means to contextualize one's faith" (p. 55) and then he states: "Theologizing in a pluri-cultural world calls for a variety

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of theologies (each a contextualization of the Christian faith)" (p. 57). A little later (p. 59) under the subtitle "Alienation of the Theologian in India," he analyses first the Indian situation. He lists the use of English, the linguistic pluralism, regional differences, tendency to political fragmentation, confusing cultural and technological paradoxes, etc., as forming the specific "context" within which the theologian in India must theologize. He analyses the massive poverty and the question how India which is economically poor is unusually rich in religion, and finally the social evil of caste factors in which the theologian in India must articulate his/her Christian experience.

Secondly, Soares-Prabhu explains the profound and pluriform alienation of the Indian theologian: alienation from the Indian people, alienation from the Indian intellectual (out of about a hundred and fifty universities in India, only five have a chair for post-graduate studies in Christian theology), alienation from the Christian people. The source of the alienation, Soares-Prabhu posits is "A Colonial Christianity."

With all these perhaps there cannot be any quarrel. But when, in "B. The Inculturation of Indian Theology", Soares-Prabhu takes up the Meaning of Inculturation, many people will find it hard to go along with him.

Under (a) Inculturation as Translation, he blames Pierre Johannes and Georges Dandoy for translating Western theology into an Indian idiom by using the terms of Vedanta, saying that culture is not a matter of words or concepts but of perspectives and attitudes. The very first article of Johannes stated that one discovers that there is not a single idea of St Thomas Aquinas which is not found somewhere or other in the Vedantic Corpus. And he added that "as systems they differ." Those articles were written when the "Fulfillment Theory" was in vogue. The title "To Christ through the Vedanta" expressed the perspective and attitude of the writer. Now R. De Smet shows somewhat the same attitude after (as he says) his "long intimacy with Indian past." He makes a brief but wider sweep of world religions with an accent on their natural dynamism towards beatific vision (*Brahmavagatir hi purusarthah*). This natural dynamism paradoxically is "teleguided" by the Holy Spirit who is *Antaryamin*.<sup>1</sup>

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1. *Vidyajyoti* Vol. 55(1991) pp.449 ff.

Soares-Prabhu continues: "Neither would the embellishment of Roman Liturgy with a few exotic oriental gestures (as in the Indian Mass celebrated in Christian ashrams and elsewhere) add up to genuine inculturation." This, I beg to say, is a misrepresentation and a misjudgement. And the same may be said about the whole paragraph containing this sentence.

Those who composed the Indian Mass did not base their work on the Roman Liturgy. The seven proclamations and acclamations which communicate a cosmic and global perspective and attitude, the double epiclesis the institution narrative, of course, could not be tampered with the anamnesis and the doxology are both Biblical and Indian. The Liturgical Commission that scrutinized the Indian Mass before submitting it to the CBCI was satisfied that it was saturated with Indian culture and faithful to the deposit of faith. The CBCI that approved the Order of the Mass has not yet accepted the Anaphora. This may explain certain incongruities.

The gestures in the Indian Mass are not "exotic" but quite "esotic," if I may say so in order to avoid the word esoteric. For Indians who are saturated with the vast corpus of the canonical scriptures of Indian theistic religions and with the corpus of the Agamic cultic worship, it is a must that they meditate simultaneously on these texts along with the Bible and the records of Christian experience as was strongly recommended by the All India Seminar on the Church in India Today during which the Indian Mass was said openly. They are not, as Soares-Prabhu alleges, "sterile imitations" nor "shallow . . . dishonest tactical accommodations of Christian doctrine and worship to Indian culture." These are harsh words from such a scholar.

The writings of Johanns and Dandoy actually provoked a series of articles in *The Examiner* of Bombay entitled "The Great Antithesis." To those of such antithetical attitudes inculturation may seem exotic.

From the "Fulfilment Theology" we moved to the Theology of the "Sacrament of Salvation." Now the process of inter-religious dialogue is leading us towards the theory of inter-religious symbiosis, a kind of mutual osmosis, or as Bede Griffiths would like to call it, "the Marriage of West and East." Soares-Prabhu would prefer the process to be one of "conversion as a passage of a religious tradition from one cultural situation to another in a movement that resembles the conversion of a person from a situation of sin to a situation of salvation."

In the process of inter-religious symbiosis, one partner does not swallow up the other, but all partners are converted (not diverted or perverted), i.e., return to their own centres continually and progressively enriched (pp. 83 and 84 acknowledge this).

De Smet has a lovely paragraph which is worth repeating at least in part. "We now grow together," says he, "and this is an enthralling experience for those among us who live at the heart of another religion. We live in a new dimension of religious freedom, that of communication in empathy and discernment rather than in mere good neighbourhood."<sup>2</sup>

Those who like Soares-Prabhu prefer discontinuity and want to distance themselves from both the West and the East may please themselves. But Ary, Azavedo and many others who find interaction and growth in inter-religious symbiosis have not to be marginalized. The discussion on inculturation at Tantur near Jerusalem was not only "innocuous" as Soares-Prabhu says (p. 85) but really enriching. And no one from the Third World who attended it suffered from "colonized consciousness" (p. 89). The Indian participants exhibited "Indian consciousness" and spoke of conculturation.

Soares-Prabhu who spoke of a variety of theologies on p. 57, speaks on p. 92 of Indian theology having a "secure identity of its own." For this he advocates, as mentioned above, (b) Distancing from the East. That Hindu and Christian spiritualities should enrich one another through inter-religious dialogue is laudable, he admits, but, he says, "one should not be allowed to swallow up the other. This, I fear, may be happening in Christian ashrams. In the often slavish imitation of brahmanical rituals, brahmanical regulations of diet, Hindu techniques of prayer<sup>3</sup> that I have seen in Christian ashrams . . ." These words may bring comfort to certain people in the

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2. Loc cit p. 456

3. Refer to "Reflections on Christian Meditation" in the *Journal of Dharma* 16 (1991) pp. 184 fol. It is a Statement made by the Indian Theological Association which met in Pune at the end of Dec. 1990, in response to Some Aspects of Christian Meditation. Also refer to "An Open Letter to American Religious Concerning Cardinal Ratzinger's Instruction on Aspects of Christian Meditation" in *Aide Inter Monasteres*, North American Board for East-West Dialogue Bulletin 38, May, 1990, pp. 7 fol. and "The Dilemma created by the Vatican Letter on Christian Meditation" in *East Asian Pastoral Review* 27, (1991) pp. 76 fff.

Church, but they go counter to many recommendations of the documents of Vatican II and the All India Seminar on the Church in India Today in 1969.

Soares-Prabhu's fear, therefore, is unwarranted. It is the anti-theetical mentality that causes that fear. The ashramites are not slavish imitators: they only give expression to their deep Indian and Christian consciousness in the most honest and sincere manner. Finally, I must say that symbiosis includes *agape* in the Indian theistic religions.

In conclusion I have to say that there seems to be a variety of Christologies. But mine has grown in continuity with Chalcedon and the Christology of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Their continuity with the apostolic kerygma is also very clear to me. And it is this Christology among other aspects of Christian theology which I give expression to in our weekly inter-religious prayer and dialogue meetings. The Hindu partners who belong to various sects appreciate what I and other Christians share with them. And when they observe and even partially participate in the Indian Mass said at Aikiya Alayam they declare, "This Mass really speaks to our hearts and we clearly see its distinction from the Hindu puja in the fact that it is centered on the historic event of Calvary."

I shall close with what I told the late Mgr Rossano from the Secretariat for Non-Christians when we were both standing among the Hindu worshippers at the morning puja in the great Chidambaram temple (words which he faithfully reported in the *Bulletin* of the Secretariat): "This worship has been the way of salvation for millions and millions of my forebears down the millenia." I am convinced that it has a right to be integrated into the Indian Christian worship.

We are not therefore called upon to jettison the wealth of religious experience of Western and Eastern Christianity. Nor should we jettison the wealth of Indian religious experience which we have inherited and which is part of our make up. They both must make a *sangamam* in our mind and heart and flow into the century that follows.

# Book Reviews

## The Spiritual Exercises

**At Home with God: A Spiritual Resource Development Programme based on the Spiritual Exercises.** By Hedwig LEWIS. Anand: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1991. Pp. xlx-360. Rs 75 pb.

**Choosing Christ in the World. A Handbook.** By Joseph A. TETLOW. Saint Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1989. Pp. 254. ISBN 0-912422-97-1.

Many people, both lay and religious, would like to make a Thirty Days Retreat, but they often just cannot give that period all in one stretch. In his *Spiritual Exercises*, St Ignatius of Loyola provided for such people. This form of 'long retreat' has become more and more widespread over the last decade or so. Here we have two manuals that serve as 'guidebooks' for the prospective pilgrims. Fr Hedwig Lewis' book is very much of a 'do it yourself' book, though he does note that the book might be used by small groups also, and that one may use it with the help of a spiritual director (xviii). Lewis divides the book into 'sections,' 'levels,' and 'topics': a 'section' contains the general thrust of a particular stage within the dynamics of the *Spiritual Exercises*; it corresponds closely to what are called the 'weeks'; a 'level' contains a specific theme within the section; the 'topic' is a daily input that helps to explore the theme (cf. xv). Fr Lewis is professor of literature and he uses his vast knowledge of that field to make the matter of the inputs very concrete and lively. Here is a book that could start many a priest on the way to deeper devotion in life. I think the size of the book and the riches it contains are a bargain for the price.

Joseph Tetlow's book is rather unique in its format: the 'book' is a loose-leaf binder: on the left hand page is information for the director, the right-hand page gives the material for the exercitant

The loose-leaf format enables the director to xerox sheets for the exercitant as and when needed (pages 8+9 tell how to use this handbook). Tetlow divides the retreat into 'preparation days,' 'first week,' 'second week,' 'third week,' and 'fourth week.' His 'book' is also the fruit of much experience, a very much prayed theology. Chapter Seven, 'Director's Notes' is full of much practicality about spiritual direction in the retreat.

The 'retreat in daily life' is a providential phenomenon: please God, it may draw many into a vision (or visions!) that even Star TV cannot provide.

Roman LEWICKI, S.J.

**The Practice of Love: The Challenge of the Spiritual Exercises.** By Gregory D'COSTA; Saroop DHRUV; F. FRANCO; M. IRUDAYARAJ; Suguna RAMANATHAN and Sarvar V. SHERRY CHAND. Anand: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1991. Pp. 304. Rs 70.

This is an interesting though at times 'difficult' book. Interesting because it incorporates the contribution of three rather remarkable non-Christian women and three Jesuit professors, two in theology, one in economics all the contributors are based in Gujarat. They are all looking at the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius "in a contextualising act which takes given aspects of the Indian scene into the heart of the *Exercises*; and, conversely, looks from the vantage point of the "from" "how" "into" movement of the *Exercises*, at the reality of the Indian scene" (p. 1). (This is a mild example of what makes the book difficult a bit too much jargon and sophisticated language.) The book seems to be the fruit of a symposium or seminar on the *Spiritual Exercises* as part of the jubilee celebrations of the past Ignatian year. It brings into interface the mentalities of

highly educated and socially committed Hindus and three Roman Catholic priests, also highly educated and socially committed. Mrs Suguna Ramanathan presents 'Salvation in the Indian Context' against the backdrop of the Ignatian scheme of the *Exercises*. Mrs Saroop Dhruv, a poetess, writes of 'Sisyphus The Phoenix: Reflections of an Activist'. Her essay, it seems to me, is all about faith, hope, and love. Her language is perhaps the most personal of all the six contributions. I found her chapter a piece of lively writing. I got a pleasant surprise when I found out that it was translated from Gujarati by Tridip Siehrud and Lester Coutinho, S.J. (The translation reads like an original English composition. That is an accomplishment that deserves praise. Such is good translation.) Sarvar V. Sherry Chand in 'Human Relationships' 'attempts to link the fundamentally transformative dynamics of the *Spiritual Exercises* with the particular form of sinfulness which, especially, oppresses women and children' (p. 107). Fr Franco then follows with a very substantial and solid contribution on 'Following Jesus in Poverty.' In his essay 'Being and Becoming Human: Morality and The *Spiritual Exercises*', Gregory D'Costa probes the *Exercises* as 'a strategy or *sadhana* for this moral imperative of humanisation' (p. 203). Irudayaraj ends the volume with 'Doing the *Spiritual Exercises* in India' in which he suggests 'with a certain daring, that any person Christian or non-Christian any person at all who is concerned, who cares about India, is a candidate for these exercises. Even a person who has so much as a desire to care is good enough as a candidate' (p. 253).

Such a brief indication of the topics of these essays does not, I know, do justice to the competence of the authors. The book is full of insights and avenues for thought and action. More than just the *Exercises* in the Indian context, this book raises the issues or the agenda for evangelization of our far-flung land. Perhaps, in its own way, the book is an indication of where evangelization is in at

least one place in India as we end the twentieth century and what it reveals is that 'the dawn from on high' is breaking upon us! Gujarat Sahitya Prakash deserves our thanks, as do all connected with the publication.

Roman LEWICKI, S.J.

**Deepest Longings: Experience of the *Spiritual Exercises*. Mary Ward's Ignatian Way.** By Thérèse DALY IBVM. Melbourne: Jesuit Publications, 1990. Pp. xiii-130 \$ 14.95 pb. ISBN 0-7316-9299-3.

This book has grown out of Sr Thérèse's own experiences of the *Spiritual Exercises*, from her studies in Ignatian spirituality, and from the experiences of working on a year's pilot course in religious education. Sr Daly felt that the Ignatian approach could be adapted to people of any age group. She has used this course with year 11 RE students as well as with teachers. The subtitle: 'Mary Ward's Ignatian Way', gives another aspect of the adaptation. The author uses Mary Ward's own retreat notes and other material to take one through the four 'weeks' of the *Exercises*. Each chapter first gives some introductory remarks which lead into a personal meditation that is to take 30 minutes. After this prayer matter she gives a selection of reactions to the exercise by young and older people who have gone through the programme. Pedagogically the book is very well constructed and includes illustrations that truly impress the truths depicted there on the exercitant's mind and heart.

I think this book would be helpful for all school people who struggle with the question how to get students (and teachers) to go more deeply into their faith. Our Indian IBVMs AND IBMV's might work out something similar for non-Christian students and teachers.

Roman LEWICKI, S.J.

**An Ignatian Journey For Lay Apostles** By Patrick O'SULLIVAN, S.J.; Una O'CONNOR, I.B.V.M. and Brian GREGAN, S.J. Anand: Gujarat Sahitya



Prakash, 1991. Pp. 106 Rs.30.

Gujarat Sahitya Prakash gives us a small but solid book on Ignatian subjects. In the first part Fr Patrick O' Sullivan, who was President of the Christian Life Communities Central Secretariat in Rome from 1980-1986, takes us on a journey through the *Spiritual Exercises* using the paradigm of the process of falling in love, leading to marriage and growth in loving. The second part of the book, by Sr Una O'Connor, and Fr Brian Grogan, is an essay on 'Reflective Living'. It is a meditative consideration of how the daily Examen can help us to integrate ourselves into God's plan to bring His life to all. The two parts of this book appeared first in *Progressio*, the CLC bulletin. Though primarily intended for lay people, I think priests and religious would benefit from meditating on the themes of this little book. I recommend it very highly—it is 'deceptively' simple and the more reflectively one reads, the more its depth comes home.

Roman LEWICKI, S.J.

**The Way of Ignatius Loyola Contemporary Approaches to the Spiritual Exercises.** Edited by Philip SHELDRAKE, S.J. London: SPCK/St Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1991. [3700 West Pine Blvd., St Louis, Mo 63108] Pp xiii-269 £15/\$19.95. ISBN 0-281-04490-2/ 0-912422-65-3

This is an excellent collection of articles from the Way (I) and the Way Supplement (WS - 18) mostly from the years 1980-87. Anyone interested in the great advances made because of the return to the sources since the late 60s in the study and giving of the *Spiritual Exercises* (SE) and Ignatian Spirituality will find great wisdom, many insights and basic orientations in these essays written by women and men with considerable contemporary experience.

In some essays misinterpretation, misunderstandings, traditions which distort the SE and false expectations are dealt with. The special character of the SE (only thirty day exercises) is the focal point throughout. Wise cautions are

given about attempts to abbreviate them into 8,10,12 . . . days' retreats and their frequent misuse for groups (e.g., in India for Tertiaries) and persons not disposed for the SE, while the diversity of spiritual exercises in Ignatius, mind and early practice are explained (18th annotation). The essay on "The Exercises in Daily Life" (for women in a Glasgow low income Housing Estate) could have been supplemented by another of a more general nature.

There are specific essays on the guidelines which Ignatius gives (Additions, Examen, The One Who Gives The Exercises . . .), two excellent studies on discernment, ("The Serpent's Tail: Rules for Discernment" and the classical article by Buckley "The Structure of the Rules for Discernment" (WS 1973) and specific studies on prayer (one is on "The prayer of faith and SE")

Naturally there are essays on each "week." The essay on "The Dynamic of the Second Week" is a weak link in the chain in my judgment and I would look for another essay on the 4th week as the essay "Contemplating Christ Risen" has too little on the week and the attempt to update directors/clients on the scriptural background and theology is too slender for those who do not know and unnecessary for those who are aware of recent studies. I would also have looked for a study of the *Contemplatio*

A major emphasis in five major essays is the social dimension (justice) of evil and Christian conversion and prayer. Many readers will profit from "The First Week and Social Sin" (excellent), "The Call on the King and Justice," "Ignatian Contemplation Today" (social dimension of prayer), "Spiritual Dimension And Social Consciousness" (insightful) and the study of the Two Standards.

Inclusive language is used and attention is given to woman. The fruits of modern psychology are evident and not intrusive. Throughout there is the wisdom of experience and a certain diversity of opinions and approaches

The fact that each essay has its own

bibliography in its footnotes and there is a bibliography of Selected Further Reading enhances the value of the book for anyone who can get to a good library.

Directors of The Spiritual Exercises (only 30 days retreats) will be greatly helped and may be cautioned about misusing the SE. Those who attempt to condense the SE into 8 days will possibly refrain from this distortion and see what would be a genuine 8 days retreat influenced by Ignatius's SE. Others will see the great variety and possibilities of forms of Exercises and Spiritual Directors will enjoy the book. A very good book for anyone involved in Retreat work and influenced by the Ignatian tradition.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J

### Social Consciousness

*Turning the Tide of Injustice* By Desmond A. D'ABREO Mangalore (St. Joseph's Highlands Lower Bendur, Karnataka-575002), 1991 Pp. xiii-345 Rs 85, (Institutions), Rs 70, (Individuals), Rs 60 (5 or more copies)

Development is about people, specifically about those people who are deprived of the basic human needs like food, clothing and shelter (p 85). Its aim is to create people's movements that are oriented to giving power to the oppressed poor, so that they can control their lives and their economy, creating a just, participatory and sustainable structure (p 334).

In this book, Desmond A. D'Abreo has given us in a systematic, scholarly and scientific way and in a lucid and pleasing style an action-oriented handbook for Christian social activists and Basic Christian Community workers, both lay and religious.

At the outset, the imaginative title "*Turning the Tide of Injustice*" focuses on the central theme of the book skilfully indicating to us both the nature of our involvement and the difficulty inherent in it. The book consists of seven chapters with a foreword by Fr Hans Staffner, S.J., a preface by the author, a note on the con-

ducting of group meeting and a conclusion.

In his conclusion (Pp.343-45) Desmond gives us a summary of the book which is worth quoting in full:

"We began with a search for a vision of society that would be just, participatory, sustainable and with respect for the integrity of creation. This vision is what we will share with our poor and oppressed people as the good news that will bring them hope. We then made an indepth critical analysis of the socio-economic political and cultural factors of our society and sought the root causes of underdevelopment. These we identified as the injustice inherent in the prevailing system and the selfishness of every individual. This looking at realities with a new sight was what Jesus stated as a major factor of his mission."

"We then moved on to analyse the various approaches to development through which we could help to release our people from their prisons of oppression, discrimination and exploitation. From there we went on to see the ways in which the oppressed could be liberated by their own education and liberation."

"Ultimately, we went into a deep reflection on the word of God where we saw his view of the poor, of oppression, of sharing and community building. Against this background we could objectively see the role of the Church as it should have been performed and the difficulties which prevent it in our country from fulfilling Christ's mission. However, we realise that as Christians, each of us has this mission and its responsibility. On each one of us devolves the duty to live up to the mission that Christ has given us. But in order to be effective, we have to move from individual efforts to working as a group, as a community that lives the spirit of the Gospel and dedicates itself to working for justice and love in this world. Thus, it will be the community of God's people which will make the Church what He really wanted it to be a sign to all the nations, a sign of the Kingdom, the Kingdom of truth and love,

of justice and equality, of brotherhood and sharing, of union and eternal life in the Father!"

The author follows the learning by doing methodology and involves the readers, participants from the very beginning in reflecting on the Indian reality and in responding to it realistically. In doing so, he uses apt illustrations, motivating examples; captivating anecdotes and poems from developing countries, structured exercises and simulation games.

He tells us what he is going to tell us (p.v.) and tells it in the body of the book in a practical and systematic manner and finally, tells us what he has already told us (pp. 343-45).

When we finish the book, the enthusiastic Christian will gain a clarity of vision and a strategy of involvement; the indifferent Christian will be challenged to respond to the Indian reality as Jesus responded to the reality of his day. That is, no one can read this book seriously and stay passive. Since November 1991, I

have been using the book in many seminars on social analysis and social spirituality and even in eight day retreats for religious men and women, and I have found it extremely useful. No wonder, then, that Bishop Bosco Penha commenting on this book in his talk on "The Bishop as a Model of and Catalyst for Social Justice in his Diocese" at the CBCI General Body Meeting held at Pune in January 1992 said: "This book is highly recommended as a resource handbook." I wholeheartedly agree.

The book has an index of Biblical texts. It should also include an index of authors. The table of contents is detailed enough as not to necessitate a separate index of themes. The author has written this book for Christians; I am happy to know that he is planning a similar book for a wider audience. (Personal communication).

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# *Vidyajyoti*

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### **FABC Focus on the Church's Evangelising Mission in Asia Today**

Jacques DUPUIS, S.J.

"In the light of several remarks about Asian Theology, it may be helpful to advise your readers about the constant teaching of the Bishops of Asia and the FABC. Fr Dupuis himself has given permission for the publication of the enclosed article which has been already published in Italian in *La Civiltà Cattolica*." Thus wrote Archbishop H. D'Souza of Calcutta and Secretary General of FABC when kindly sending this article from the former editor of VJTR, whose address is Pontificia Università Gregoriana, Piazza della Pilotta, 4, I-00187 Roma.

**T**he Fifth Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) met at Bandung, Indonesia, from 17th to 27th July, 1990. It issued a *Final Statement* entitled "Journeying Together toward the Third Millennium." The title itself is indicative of a mission programme for the churches in Asia in the 1990s. "Journeying together" opens up the perspective of Christians and the "others" being on a joint pilgrimage, building together the Kingdom of God which, though it is already present among them, must continue to grow unto its fullness in the end-time. Such a perspective, stirring as it certainly is, may nevertheless raise questions: Does not its "Regnocentrism" run the risk of underestimating the role of the Church in relation to the Reign of God and, ultimately, that of Christ in whom God's reign has been inaugurated in history? Moreover, the stress laid on inter-religious dialogue and cooperation between Christians and others in building the Kingdom, does it not lead to

overshadowing the Church's mission of proclaiming Jesus Christ as universal Saviour and of inviting the others to become his disciples in the Church? Added to these is a third question: Is the perspective opened up by the last FABC Plenary Assembly really new? Or does it link up with the original focus of the FABC's theology of mission, even while presenting it with a new emphasis and urgency? This paper will show that such is the case; it will moreover show the constancy of the FABC theological tradition on mission, through other official documents published over the last two decades.

### 1. Mission Perspective of FABC's Fifth Plenary Assembly

The third part of the above-mentioned document is entitled "The Evangelising Mission of the Church in Contemporary Asia."<sup>1</sup> Mission, the document says, involves "being with the people, responding to their needs with sensitiveness to the presence of God in cultures and other religious traditions, and witnessing to the values of God's Kingdom through presence, solidarity, sharing and word. Mission will mean a dialogue with Asia's poor, with its local cultures, and with other religious traditions" (3.1.2). As motivations for mission the document mentions: gratitude to God, the mandate from Christ to make disciples, faith in the Lord Jesus, the Church's missionary nature, and adds: "Finally, we evangelise because the Gospel is a *leaven* for liberation and for the transformation of society. Our Asian world needs the values of the Kingdom and of Christ in order to bring about the development, justice, peace and harmony with God, among peoples and with all creation that the peoples of Asia long for" (3.2.5). Christians must be "joyful witnesses of the values of the Kingdom, and of Christ whose disciples they are" (3.2.). The acting subject of mission is the *local church*; she it is who can "discern and work out (in dialogue with each other and with other persons of good will) the way the Gospel is best proclaimed, the Church set up, the values of God's Kingdom realised in their own place and time" (3.3.1).

Mission "may find its greatest urgency in Asia" (4.1). The document makes its own the statement of the "All-Asia Conference on Evangelisation," organised by the FABC Office of Evangelisation, in

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<sup>1</sup> The document is published in *FABC Papers*, No.59, pp.25-43. The numbers between brackets are those of the document. So too for all documents quoted here subsequently. For comments on the document, see F. WILFRED, "Fifth Plenary Assembly of FABC," *Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection*, 54(1990)583-592.

Suwon, Korea, August 24-31, 1988, according to which "the proclamation of Jesus Christ is the centre and primary element of evangelisation" (4.1).<sup>2</sup> But it explains what a distinctive Asian mode of proclamation would consist of at the present time:

The proclamation of Jesus Christ in Asia means, first of all, the witness of Christians and of Christian communities to the values of the Kingdom of God, *a proclamation* through Christlike deeds . . . Proclamation through dialogue and deeds — this is the first call to the Churches of Asia (4.1).

Mission in Asia will also seek through *dialogue to serve* the cause of unity of the peoples of Asia marked by such a diversity of beliefs, cultures and socio-political structures. In an Asia marked by diversity and torn by conflicts, the Church must in a special way be a sacrament — a visible sign and instrument of unity and harmony (4.2).

But we shall not be timid when God opens the door for us to *proclaim* explicitly the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour and the answer to the fundamental questions of human existence (4.3).

The document repeats that the Church must work in collaboration with Christians of other churches and people of other religions and persuasions to "inscribe the values of the Kingdom in Asian society" (4.6). This the Christian community must do in *companionship*, "as true *partners* with all Asians as they pray, work, struggle for a better human life and progress" (6.2). "It is as *servants of the Lord* and of *humanity* that Christians share the same journey with all the Asian peoples . . ." For, "the Church was not sent to be served but to serve . . . and to discern, in dialogue with Asian peoples and Asian realities, what deeds the Lord wills to be done so that all humankind may be gathered together in harmony as his family" (6.3). Only such a Church, "witnessing by its very being and deeds to the values of the Kingdom of God, will be credible when it proclaims with the lips that Jesus is the Saviour of the world and the answer to all its longings" (6.6).

It was necessary to quote at length before attempting an answer to the questions formulated above. The latest FABC Plenary Assembly undoubtedly stresses the Kingdom of God perspective at the service of which the Church is placed, but without undermining the Church's sacramentality or the foundation of the Kingdom of God in Jesus Christ. It likewise insists on dialogue and cooperation with others in building the Kingdom of God and fostering its values in

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2. "The Urgency of Christian Mission," *FABC Papers*, No.50, p.75. The quotation is from the Statement of the Conference (6).

Asian society, but without underestimating the centrality of the proclamation of Jesus Christ. It points to three dimensions of dialogue — with the poor, with cultures, and with religious traditions — but without reducing mission to action for social liberation, inculturation and inter-religious dialogue. Can the document be seen as continuing and prolonging the FABC tradition on mission theology?

For an answer we may take our clue from an Asian theologian who, in an article published three months before the FABC Bandung Plenary Assembly, described what he thinks characterises the mission perspective fostered by FABC since its beginning in 1970, that is: "missionary dialogue." He writes:

From 1971 onwards it has been affirmed — most clearly by the FABC General Assembly of 1974 at Taipei — that the "basic mode of mission in Asia" must be dialogue. *Missionary* dialogue, of course. We must explore the interface of the Gospel's meanings and values with the realities of Asia and its many peoples — its histories and cultures, religions and religious traditions, and especially its "poor masses" in every country. These realities — cultures, religions, life-situations of poverty — make up the ambience and context wherein the Gospel is to be proclaimed; these realities define the "place" for the localisation of the Church and the inchoate "real-ization" of God's Kingdom.

The overarching programme of dialogue with the cultures (i.e., inculturation), with the religions and religious traditions (i.e., inter-religious dialogue), and with "our peoples, especially the poor multitudes in Asia" (i.e., development/liberation), has been the thematic background of both the pastoral and missionary activity of the local churches of Asia in the past twenty years. In the 1979 International Mission Congress (Manila) it was used as the overall framework for reflection on mission and the tasks of mission in the 1980s.<sup>3</sup> For the 1990s these dialogues remain the headings under which the concerns and activities of Christian mission are collocated. It is in the endeavour to bring these dialogues into life and practice, and in the ongoing reflection on the processes they have initiated, that the way of theologising on mission must surely be constructed in the decade to come.<sup>4</sup>

"Missionary dialogue," with a threefold dialogue with the poor, with cultures and religions, is thus clearly traced back to the First

3. See *Towards a New Age in Mission*. International Congress on Mission, 2-7 December 1979, 2 vols., Manila: IMC, 1981. The Congress indicated the "continued building up of the local church as the focus of the task of evangelisation today, with dialogue as its essential mode, through . . . inculturation; through inter-religious dialogue . . . ; through solidarity and sharing with the poor and the advocacy of human rights . . ." (19) vol. I, p. 26. (My note.)

4. I.C.G. AREVALO, "Mission in the 1990s: Agenda for Missio", *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, April 1990, p. 50.

FABC Plenary Assembly, held in Taipei, 22-26 April 1974. It will be worth showing how it was understood by the Taipei assembly.<sup>5</sup> The theme of the assembly was designed to coincide with that of the 1974 Synod of Bishops on Evangelisation of the Modern World. In its Communication to the Synod, entitled "Evangelisation in Modern Day Asia," the Taipei assembly stresses from the outset the abiding need and urgency of the proclamation of Jesus Christ:

We believe that it is in (Christ) and in his good news that our peoples will finally find the full meaning we all seek, the liberation we strive after, the brotherhood and peace which is the desire of all our hearts.

It is because of this that the preaching of Jesus Christ and his Gospel to our peoples in Asia becomes a task which today assumes an urgency, a necessity and magnitude unmatched in the history of our faith in this part of the world (7-8).

The document goes on to point out that "to preach the Gospel in Asia today we must make the message and life of Christ truly incarnate in the minds and lives of our peoples. The primary focus of our task of evangelisation then, at this time in our history, is the building up of a truly local church" (10). The local church is "a Church incarnate in a people, a church indigenous and inculturated. And this means concretely a church in continuous, humble and living dialogue with the living traditions, the cultures, the religions — in brief, with all the life-realities of the people in whose midst it has sunk its roots deeply and whose history and life it gladly makes its own" (12). In Asia especially, the document insists, a local church must be a church in "dialogue with the great religious traditions of our peoples" (13-18), and "with the poor" (19-24).

Having described the threefold dialogue without which the Church cannot become truly incarnate in Asian reality, the document goes on to show the relationship of this threefold task to the Church's mission of evangelisation:

Evangelisation is the carrying out of the Church's duty of proclaiming by word and witness the Gospel of the Lord. Within this context we have spoken of these tasks which are of particularly crucial importance for most of the local churches in Asia, for through them our local churches can most effectively preach Christ to our peoples (25).

In the light of these texts it will be clear that for the Taipei Assembly the threefold dialogue of the local church with cultures, religions and the poor, are distinct aspects of its true embodiment in

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5. The text is found in *For All the Peoples of Asia* (FAPA), vol.1; Manila: IMC Publications, 1984, pp. 25-41.



the concrete reality of a people, without which it cannot fulfil effectively its evangelising mission. In this sense the three dialogues are essential tasks and priorities. They do not, however, dispense the Church from her duty to proclaim Jesus Christ; rather, "through them our local Churches can most effectively preach Christ to our peoples" (25) — "a task which today assumes an urgency, a necessity and magnitude unmatched in the history of our faith in this part of the world" (8). It would be mistake to conclude from the Taipei statement that the assembly reduces the Church's evangelising mission in Asia to inculturation, inter-religious dialogue and the involvement in human liberation, to the exclusion of the proclamation of Jesus Christ.<sup>6</sup>

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6. In an article entitled "Evangelisation in Asia: A New Focus?," published in *Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection* 51(1987) 7-28, M. AMALADOSS, commenting on the Taipei document, remarks that according to it the activity of building up the local Church — in which evangelisation consists — "finds expression in a threefold dialogue with the local cultures, with the religions and with the poor of Asia" (p.7). Again he writes: "Taking into account the situation in Asia, the Asian bishops analyse the building up of the local church in terms of a threefold dialogue with the cultures, with the religions and with the poor of Asia. The dimensions of evangelisation in Asia are therefore spelt out as inculturation, inter-religious dialogue and liberation, all of them contributing to the building up of the local church" (p.11). According to the author, adding proclamation to the list would result in breaking the totality of the "one task of building up the local church as the focus of evangelisation" (p.11). "While Asia sees inculturation, dialogue and liberation as various aspects or dimensions or forms of proclamation of the Good News in concrete ways, corresponding to various situations of reality, the addition of "proclamation" as a fourth term (would) break up this unity and (make) all of them various tasks that a missionary engages in, according to the situation" (p.11). Again he writes: Inculturation, inter-religious dialogue and liberation are "three integral dimensions of one activity that is evangelisation" (p.13). The same article appears also in Id., *Making All Things New: Mission in Dialogue*, Anand: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1990, pp. 15-41.

In his inaugural address entitled "Missionary Challenges to the Theology of Salvation," delivered at the International Missionary Congress held at the Pontificia Università Urbaniana in 1988, Cardinal J. TOMKO disapproved of a certain "global" view of evangelisation with the building of the Kingdom of God as its focal point. Evangelisation, according to that view, would consist in building a new humanity in which all people are united in love, justice and peace. To this mission "the Church must collaborate through dialogue, inculturation and liberation." "Strangely but significantly," the Cardinal added, "proclamation or announcing is omitted" (*La salvezza oggi*, Roma: Pontificia Università Urbaniana, 1989, p. 24). Cardinal Tomko returned to the same topic in an address delivered at the Cardinals' consistory of 5th April, 1991: "Evangelisation in the global sense, with its "focal point" in the construction of the Kingdom or of a new humanity, would consist only in *dialogue, inculturation, and liberation*. Strangely but significantly, announcing or proclamation is omitted" (*L'Osservatore Romano*, 6 aprile 1991, p. 4). — For reactions to various aspects of Cardinal Tomko's Missionary Congress inaugural address, see P. MOJŽES & L. SWIDLER (eds), *Christian Mission and Interreligious Dialogue*, Lewiston, The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990, where the inaugural talk is found in English translation.

As for the Kingdom of God perspective, it remains absent in the Taipei document which focuses instead on the local church. The second part of the present paper will show how the Kingdom of God perspective has entered into the thinking of subsequent documents of FABC; the third will likewise show that this broader perspective notwithstanding, proclamation continues to be affirmed as an indispensable expression of the Church's evangelising mission.

## 2. Building the Reign of God as Focus of the Church's Mission

The Reign of God, as we have shown above, constitutes an important aspect of the mission perspective of the Fifth FABC Plenary Assembly (1990), which was absent in the first (1974). Where and when has that new focus been introduced in official FABC documents and how did it develop? To answer this question, it is not enough to take into account the Final Statements of FABC Plenary Assemblies. It is also necessary to consider the Conclusions of the Bishops' Institutes organised over the years by the various Offices of FABC: the Bishops' Institutes for Mission Animation (BIMA), for Inter-religious Affairs (BIRA), and for Social Action (BISA).

The perspective of the Reign of God first appears in the documents of the Bishops' Institutes for Social Action.<sup>7</sup> BISA III (1975)<sup>8</sup> speaks of the involvement of the local Church in "building God's Kingdom on earth"<sup>(8)</sup> by fostering Gospel values<sup>(8)</sup> together with adherents of other religious faiths and people of good will <sup>(6)</sup>. BISA IV (1978)<sup>9</sup> warns that we must be "prepared to risk everything for the growth of God's Kingdom" <sup>(11)</sup>. BISA VI (1983)<sup>10</sup> hopes that, by becoming "the Church of the poor," the Church in Asia may be "a sign and sacrament of the Kingdom of God" <sup>(19)</sup>. BISA VII (1986)<sup>11</sup> summarises the previous meetings. It notes that "the Gospel of the Kingdom is being shaped in the reality of (the) lives (of the poor) and the Spirit of Jesus the Liberator is at work among them"<sup>(11)</sup>.

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7. The conclusions of various BISA meetings are found in FAPA, vol.2, Manila: IMC Publications, 1987, pp. 345-393.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 357-361.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 363-370.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 379-385.

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 387-393.

The BIRA meetings too offered an opportunity to bring out the theme of the Kingdom of God present and at work among people of other faiths.<sup>12</sup> BIRA II (1979)<sup>13</sup> affirms that the Church's task is "always to proclaim the Reign of God, to bring the proclamation of this message into every aspect of human life, and to seek the fulfilment of all things in Christ — which is its central mission — is to call man to the values of the Kingdom of God"(13). Such values being present also in people of other faiths, they together with Christians may "turn anew to God's Kingdom" through dialogue(13). BIRA IIK(1982) in its turn recommends "common action for the promotion of integral human values" (recommendation 3) and concludes that dialogue is a challenge to the churches in Asia "in their growing commitment to the building of the Kingdom" (Conclusion).

The BIRA IV/1-12<sup>14</sup> meetings, held over the years 1984-1991, had as common general theme, "The Theology of Dialogue." This offered the opportunity to insert the other religious traditions and the practice of inter-religious dialogue within the broad reality of the Kingdom of God. BIRA IV/1 (1984)<sup>15</sup> remarks that "the relationship of the Church to the Kingdom" is in need of clarification(9), and that "the Spirit's action, his presence and ministry can — and must — be discerned both in other religions and even in secular movements that may be shaped and leading to the Kingdom of God" (10). The clarifications desired are provided by the Final Statement of BIRA IV/2 (1985)<sup>16</sup> to which ample reference needs to be made here. The special theme of the meeting was "The Church at the Service of God's Reign;" its aim, that the Church of Asia may become "a better sign and an instrument of the Reign of God." The "values of the Kingdom," it is said, are present in people of other religions, in their beliefs and persuasions; the Church must emerge from her self-centredness to reach out to them (3). There follows an important statement:

The Reign of God is the very reason for the being of the Church. The Church exists in and for the Kingdom. The Kingdom, God's gift and initiative, is already begun and is continually being realized, and made

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12. The Conclusions of BIRA I-III are found in FAPA, vol.1, pp. 181-204.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 189-195.

14. The conclusions of BIRA IV/1-IV/3 are found in FAPA, vol.2, pp. 415-436. Those of BIRA IV/4-12 are not found in FAPA, vol.2; unless otherwise indicated they are quoted from manuscript form.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 415-420.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 421-427.

present through the Spirit. Where God is accepted, when the Gospel values are lived, where man is respected, . . . there is the Kingdom. It is far wider than the Church's boundaries. This already present reality is oriented towards the final manifestation and full perfection of the Reign of God (8.1).

The Church is an instrument for the actualisation of the Kingdom. In this process of continual renewal and actualisation, she empties herself and dies like her Master (Phil 2:7), through transforming and suffering and even persecution, so that she may rise to a new life which approaches the reality of the Kingdom (8.2).

The document notes further that the Reign of God is "best proclaimed by an authentic witness to the Gospel values" — "witness in being and in deeds" which is the first expression of dialogue (8.4). Dialogue "is based on the firm belief that the Holy Spirit is operative in other religions" (8.5). The Church has received from God her vocation to be "a sign of the Kingdom;" but she must constantly heal herself to become "a more authentic sign of the grace of the Kingdom" (11), "a servant of all in God's Reign" (recommendation 2). In conclusion, the hope is expressed "that men and women of faith and good will, strengthened by the experience of common humanity, will join in the building of God's Kingdom, whose completion he alone can bring about"(15).

BIRA IV/3 (1986)<sup>17</sup> repeats that the Church must "move out of herself and into fellowship with all people of good will as an effective way to work for the Reign which Christ proclaimed" (5). The Spirit is active among the nations, religions and peoples of Asia today, as clear signs of his presence testify (6); the fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23) which "embody the values of the Reign of God of which the Church is the visible sign" must serve as constant guide in discerning the presence of the Spirit in others (10). The action of the Spirit, however, is bound to that of Christ: "What the Spirit does, and continues to do, is inseparable from what Christ said and did" (11). The Statement ends up advocating as correct, in view of the working of the Spirit beyond the boundaries of the Church, the attitude of "receptive pluralism" by which "the many ways of responding to the promptings of the Holy Spirit (are) continually in conversation with one another"(16). It reiterates the hope that the churches in Asia, together with others, "will jointly make the Reign of God more visibly present, a Reign of freedom, justice, love and peace"(17).

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 429-436.

BIRA IV/4 (1987) acknowledged that "inter-religious dialogue flows from the nature of the Church, a community in pilgrimage, journeying with people of other faiths towards the Kingdom that is to come" (2). It called on Christians to cooperate with the members of other religious traditions for "the transformation of our country (the Philippines) into one that reflects more closely the Kingdom of God" (8). BIRA IV/6 (1987) took the shape of an Ecumenical Consultation jointly organised by FABC and the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) on "Living and Working Together with Sisters and Brothers of Other Faiths."<sup>18</sup> The Joint Statement of the Consultation notes that "God's recreating activity is prior to and more comprehensive than the Church's mission, and it directs our attention beyond the Church to the Kingdom" (5), towards which neighbours of other religions are moving with us as our "fellow-pilgrims," and of which the Church is called to be "an effective sign and symbol" (6). BIRA IV/7 (1988), continuing the theme of BIRA IV/6, affirmed that "for us, Christians, dialogue demands a total Christ-like self-emptying, so that, led by the Spirit, we may be more effective instruments in building up God's Kingdom" (16).

The Kingdom of God theme figures again prominently in BIRA IV/10 (1988),<sup>19</sup> which had for its special theme "Theology of Harmony." An important statement was made by that meeting which it is necessary to quote:

Through Christ and in Christ the Kingdom of God has come and is now progressing to its fulfilment. It is a force transforming the world. Necessarily, the Kingdom of God confronts the forces of injustice, violence and oppression . . . . Hence, solidarity with the poor is a response to the Good News of God's Kingdom. Where this solidarity exists, there the power of Christ's Spirit is working. The work of the Spirit appears in the struggle for a better world in all its forms. We see people of all faiths participating in that struggle (7).

The coming of the Kingdom requires of us Christians a genuine conversion. We need to recognise first our failures; and we need to abandon our self-image as sole possessors of the Kingdom . . . (8).

As Christians, the document goes on to say, we are called to share the Kingdom of God with others by our life, witness, and

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18. Its proceedings are published under the title "Living and Working Together with Sisters and Brothers of Other Faiths." In *FABC Papers*, No.49. The Joint Statement of Consultation is found on pp. 57-60.

19. Text in *Bulletin. Pontificium Consilium pro dialogo inter religiones*, no.71; 24(1989/2), pp. 155-163.

proclamation (9). BIRA IV/11 (1988)<sup>20</sup> took up the same theme of harmony. It noted:

It is this grand design of God for universal harmony which we Christians experience in the person, life and teaching of Jesus Christ. His proclamation of the Reign of God embodies God's plan in creation. For it points to the gathering of all peoples and nations into one family as brothers and sisters under the fatherhood of God . . . . By undergoing (the) paschal experience in the footsteps of Christ, we will be able to taste and savour justice, peace and joy (2 Cor 14:17), the fruits of God's Reign . . . (9).

It is our conviction that the Spirit of God, bestowed on all the peoples of different nations, races, cultures and languages, as represented in the event of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-12), continues to weave bonds of unity among them today, and guides them towards wholeness and integrity . . . (10).

As for the Church, she is created by the Spirit as "a fellowship or communion in Christ in service of the unity of the entire human-kind" (11).

BIRA IV/12 (1991), the last of the series, marked both an end and a new beginning. Its theme was "Inter-religious Dialogue: Fresh Horizons for Communion and Cooperation Today." Returning to the Reign of God theme, the conclusions of this meeting<sup>21</sup> see it as "God's dream for the world": "Jesus' mission was to share the Good News of God's dream for the world. He spoke of the dream through the image of God's Reign . . . . We may describe the dream as one of people and communities fully alive. That fullness of life is ultimately communion of life among individuals, among communities and with God" (2.1). Human values, such as "life, dignity, equality, justice and social order" (6.9) are values of the Reign of God (6.10) which Christians and others can cooperate in promoting together. "We are called to cooperate with all believers and other people of good will who work to uphold human values. As Christians we see such work as proclamation of, and preparing the way for, the coming of the Reign of God" (6.10). The Church must "work with other believers and believing communities for a world where people and communities are fully alive, for a communion of all life, for the final coming of God's dream" (9.8). The document ends up hoping that the Church may become "more effectively a sign of reconciliation, a sign of the Reign of God, a sign of the love

20. Text in *Bulletin. Pontificum Consilium pro dialogo inter religiones*, n. 71; 24(1989/2), pp. 155-163.

of God in Asia" (10.3).

The various BISA and BIRA meetings, as references here above amply show, laid increasing emphasis over the years on the Kingdom of God theme as a focus for mission in the Asian context. They saw the Kingdom of God as a reality already present in history and extending beyond the Church's boundaries; they saw it as being built by Christians and others together, especially through their common involvement for human liberation and the practice of inter-religious dialogue. There remains to show how the FABC Plenary Assemblies have reflected progressively the same concern, thus leading to the perspective of the Fifth Plenary Assembly exposed earlier.

The FABC Third Plenary Assembly, held at Bangkok, 20-27 October 1982, had for its theme "The Church — A Community of Faith." Its Statement<sup>21</sup> notes that "our Christian communities in Asia must listen to the Spirit at work in the many communities of believers who live and experience their own faith . . . and that they . . . must accompany these others 'in a common pilgrimage toward the ultimate goal, in relentless quest for the Absolute'" (8.2). The Church, it is added, "constantly moves forward in mission, as it accompanies all humankind in its pilgrimage to the Kingdom of the Father" (15). As for the FABC Fourth Plenary Assembly, 16-25 September 1986, held in Tokyo, its theme was "The Vocation and Mission of the Laity in the Church and in the World of Asia." Its Statement<sup>22</sup> sees the "seeds of the Kingdom" present in the youth of Asia (3.2.3) as well as in diverse cultures and religions (3.6.5). Within this plurality of cultures the Church's task consists on the one hand in infusing Gospel values, and on the other in "drawing out more explicitly" the "seeds of the Kingdom" already present (3.6.5). She must "reach out to millions struggling for social transformation — a struggle that requires an inter-faith collaboration" (3.6.6). She must "rediscover Jesus Christ as the Liberator of Asia, and his Church as the servant and instrument of that liberation" (4.1.1). More explicitly, while outlining the main lines of lay spirituality, the Statement says:

Seeking the Kingdom that Jesus proclaimed is really to build it in the concrete experiences of the social, political, economic, religious and

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21. Text in *Bulletin. Pontificium Consilium pro dialogo inter religiones*, no.76; 26(1991/1), pp. 24-35.

22. Text in FAPA, vol.1, pp.89-102.

23. Text in FAPA, vol.2, pp. 311-341.

cultural world of Asia. In Jesus the Reign of God began; he came that we might have life to the full. The struggle for fullness of life in Asia is a seeking of the Kingdom. Discipleship then is not at all a withdrawal from the world, but an immersion into the wellspring of Asian reality so that it might have life. Communion, solidarity, compassion, justice, love are keynotes of a spirituality of discipleship ... (4.8.7).

... The spirituality of the People of God is a journey in the Spirit of Jesus into the Kingdom of the Father; it is a journey of discipleship, of love and service, after the pattern of the dying and rising of Jesus himself (4.8.8).

### 3. "Mission Dialogue" and Proclamation of Jesus Christ

We have shown earlier that the last FABC Plenary Assembly of Bandung (1990), while laying stress on the local Church's three-fold dialogue with cultures, religions and the poor as constituting the missionary thrust of the Asian churches, in no way underestimates the importance of the proclamation of Jesus Christ. We have traced this missionary integral perspective to the First FABC Plenary Assembly of Taipei (1974). There remains to show how the same has been constantly maintained and developed through the years, not only in the Plenary Assemblies but also in the various BISA, BIRA and BIMA meetings.

Little is found on this point in the BISA meetings. However, BISA VI (1983)<sup>24</sup> notes that "in Asia where Christians are an insignificant minority in terms of numbers compared to the masses in the non-Christian religions, the dialogue of life with the poor referred to in the FABC Plenary Assembly Statement in 1974 is paralleled with a dialogue of life with members of non-Christian religions. This dialogue studies the positive elements in these religions in order to make all people, both Christians and non-Christians, respond together to the poor, irrespective of caste or creed"(10).

The various BIRA meetings held over the years offered ample opportunity to stress the place of inter-religious dialogue in the Church's overall mission and its relation to the proclamation of the Gospel. BIRA I (1979)<sup>25</sup> already noted that dialogue, understood as mutual encounter after the model of the Incarnate Word "spoken

24. Text in FAPA, vol.2, pp. 379-385.

25. Text in FAPA, vol.1, pp. 181-187.

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 197-204.



into human history," is "intrinsic to the very life of the Church, and the essential mode of all evangelisation" (8-0). BIRA III (1982)<sup>26</sup> expresses the relationship between inter-religious dialogue and proclamation as follows: "As God's pilgrim people, the Church shares the longings and desires of all to come closer to the Father, while as God's eschatological people, it announces Jesus Christ and his Good News to all and calls them to radical conversion . . . and to belong to the community of Jesus in his Church" (3). Thus, "dialogue and proclamation are complementary;" for, unlike proclamation, "sincere and authentic dialogue does not have for its objective the conversion of the other," but "promotes mutual understanding and enrichment" (4-5). The meeting concludes that "dialogue is a crucial challenge to the churches in Asia in their growing commitment to the building of the Kingdom" (Conclusion).

The relationship between dialogue and proclamation is amply reflected upon in the series of BIRA IV/1-12 meetings (1984-1991), with their general theme on "The Theology of Dialogue." According to BIRA IV/2 (1985)<sup>27</sup> "the Reign of God will be best proclaimed by an authentic witness to the Gospel values" (4). The FABC-CCA Joint Consultation which took the place of BIRA IV/6 (1987)<sup>28</sup> affirmed that "dialogue and mission have their own integrity and freedom. They are distinct but not unrelated. Dialogue is not a tool or instrument for mission and evangelisation, but it does influence the way the Church perceives and practices mission in a pluralistic world" (5); in the Asian context, moreover, dialogue is "an urgent priority for the churches" (2). BIRA IV/7 (1988) further explains the autonomy of dialogue and its relation to proclamation, saying that "dialogue must be open to proclamation" (13). BIRA IV/10 (1988)<sup>29</sup> speaks of the Christians' duty to "share the Kingdom of God by (their) life, witness and proclamation" (9). According to BIRA IV/11 (1988),<sup>30</sup> to be promoters of "harmony," Christians and others must see the "complementarity which exists between peoples, cultures, faiths, ideologies, world-views, etc." and "cultivate an all-embracing and complementary way of thinking," "characteristic of

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27. Text in FAPA, vol.2, pp. 421-427.

28. See *FABC Papers* No.49, pp. 57-60.

29. Text in *Bulletin. Pontificium Consilium pro dialogo inter religiones*, no.71; 24(1989/2), pp. 151-154.

30. Text in *Bulletin. Pontificium Consilium pro dialogo inter religiones*, no.71; 24(1989/2), pp. 155-163.

Asian traditions which consider the various dimensions of reality not as contradictory, but as complementary (*yin-yang*)" (20).

Ending the series of BIRA IV, BIRA IV/12 (1991)<sup>31</sup> called Asian churches to "a new way of being Church" — churches of dialogue. "Such a Church is never centred on itself but on the coming true of God's dream for the world. It seeks not to exclude others but to be truly catholic . . ." (9.1-2). It "stands with sisters and brothers of other faiths in confronting issues of life and death . . ." (9.3). "In this model of Church, dialogue, liberation, inculturation and proclamation are but different aspects of the one reality" (9.4). Characteristically, in this last sentence the threefold dialogue incumbent on Asian churches is recorded conjointly with proclamation.

As would be expected, the BIMA meetings stressed the abiding need and urgency of the proclamation of Jesus Christ. BIMA I (1978)<sup>32</sup> noted that it had reached the same conclusions as did the First FABC Plenary Assembly of Taipei (1974) on special "areas to be explored," namely "those of inculturation of the Christian faith, the encounter with Asian religions, and the challenge posed to the Church by the poverty of the vast majority of our people" (6). It insisted that "religious dialogue is not just a substitute for, or a mere preliminary to, the proclamation of Christ, but should be the ideal form of evangelisation where . . . we seek together with our brothers and sisters (the) fullness of Christ which is God's plan for the whole of creation" (10). It nevertheless welcomes "with a sense of urgency the task of making Christ known, loved and followed by the vast multitude of our brothers and sisters" (2), and "the urgent duty of proclaiming the Good News to the peoples of Asia," which is the "primary task of the Churches" (19). BIMA II (1980)<sup>33</sup> affirms that the promotion of integral human development and witness to justice (12), as well as inter-religious dialogue (14), are "integral parts of evangelisation;" while BIMA III (1982)<sup>34</sup> urges that "the necessity of first proclamation has lost none of its urgency in Asia, where Christians constitute a very small minority" (9): proclamation remains "an essential element" of the Church's mission (6).

The last in the series of BIMA meetings took the shape of an All-

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31. Text in *Bulletin. Pontificium Consilium pro dialogo inter religiones*, no.76; 26(1991/1), pp. 24-35.

32. Text in FAPA, vol.1, pp. 155-159.

33. *Ibid.*, pp. 161-167.

34. *Ibid.*, pp. 169-177.

Asia Conference on Evangelisation, already referred to above, which was held in Suwon, Korea (24-31 August 1988). Its general theme was "The Urgency of Christian Mission."<sup>35</sup> The Statement of the Conference reaffirms in unequivocal terms the primacy of proclamation among the various aspects of the Church's evangelising mission. This important text needs to be quoted:

The ultimate goal of all evangelisation is the ushering in and establishment of God's Kingdom, namely, God's rule in the hearts and minds of our people. While we are aware of, and sensitive to the fact that evangelisation is a complex reality and has many essential aspects — such as witnessing to the Gospel, working for the values of the Kingdom, struggling along with those who strive for justice and peace, dialogue, sharing, inculturation, mutual enrichment with other Christians and the followers of all religions — we affirm that there can never be true evangelisation without the proclamation of Jesus Christ (5).

The proclamation of Jesus Christ is the centre and the primary element of evangelisation without which all other elements will lose their cohesion and validity . . . (6).

. . . We also affirm that the primary task of the Church is the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, calling to personal faith in him, inviting to membership in the Church those whom God has chosen, and celebrating salvation through Christ in our belonging to the Church. Every other task of the Church flows from and is related to this proclamation and its acceptance in faith. The Gospel fulfills all hopes, a Gospel which Asia and the whole world direly need (7).

Nothing could be more explicit. As for the FABC Plenary Assemblies which intervened between Taipei (1974) and Bandung (1990), while affirming that involvement in human promotion and inter-religious dialogue are authentic expressions of the Church's evangelising mission, they too did not fail to state the lasting value of proclamation. Thus, the Bangkok Third Plenary Assembly (1982)<sup>36</sup> affirmed that the Asian churches must fulfil "the Gospel mandate of mission," by "proclaiming the Word through word and witness, reaching out to others through ways of dialogue, and-serving in evangelical diakonia" (7.9). It reminded the churches that "the summons and challenge to make known the person and message of Jesus Christ to those who do not know him is a mandate addressed

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35. See "The Urgency of Christian Mission," in *FABC Papers*, No.50. The Statement of the Conference, entitled "Evangelisation in Asia Today," is found on pp. 74-78.

36. Text in FAPA, vol.1, pp. 89-102.

37. Text in FAPA, vol.2, pp. 311-341.

to even the youngest Christian community" (9.9). Similarly, the Tokyo Fourth Plenary Assembly (1986)<sup>37</sup>, whose general theme was "The Vocation and Mission of the Laity in the Church and in the World of Asia," called on the Church to be not inward-looking, but "outward and forward-looking," as "we go along with Jesus" on our journey to liberation (4.3,1-2). The Church's function is priestly, prophetic and royal. Her prophetic function must be "a witness and a service of the whole community to the saving truth of Christ and his Church" (4.4.3).

A last document may be examined before concluding. Recently, the FABC Office of Evangelisation called a consultation on "Mission Theology Today," which took place at Hua-Hin, Thailand, 3-10 November, 1991. Admittedly, this consultation of theologians belongs to a category of meetings distinct from the assemblies of bishops to which this study has been devoted. However, its conclusions<sup>38</sup> may provide a useful confirmation of the FABC thrust on Mission of which they resume the salient features. In a first part, the conclusions of the theological consultation make an analysis of the social, cultural and religious situation of Asia (2-11), as well as of the situation of Asian local churches (12-16). At the end of this section, it is observed that "there is a gap between the vision statements of FABC on the triple dialogue with the poor, with cultures and with religions and the everyday life of the churches" (15). The second part, entitled "A Call to Conversion," spells out what dialogue with the poor (17-19) and with cultures and religions (20-22) should really entail; it further explains what would make a Church a truly "servant of his plan of salvation; servant also of the Asian peoples, of their deep hopes, longings and aspirations; servant of the followers of other religions, of all women and men, simply and totally for others" (23).

The third part proposes "some theological reflections on the Asian context of evangelisation." Jesus Christ is at the centre of the Christian faith: "The paschal mystery in which the Christ-event culminates . . . ushers in the renewal of creation and marks the decisive step in the establishment by God of his Kingdom on earth. It has cosmic implications and universal significance" (28). "The Kingdom of God is therefore universally present and at work" (29).

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38. They have been published by the FABC Secretariat, Hong Kong. The papers contributed by the participants at the consultation are to be published in a volume form.

"The Reign of God is a universal reality extending far beyond the boundaries of the Church. It is the reality of salvation in Jesus Christ, in which Christians and others share together" (30). "Seen in this manner," the document explains, "a 'Regno-centric' approach to mission theology does not in any way threaten the Christocentric perspective of our faith; on the contrary, 'Regno-centrism' calls for 'Christocentrism', and vice versa, for it is in Jesus Christ and through the Christ-event that God has established his Kingdom upon the earth and in human history" (30).

For the "unique and irreplaceable" role of the Church at the service of the Kingdom, the conclusions refer, on the one hand, to the "Theses on Interreligious Dialogue" (1987) of the FABC Theological Advisory Commission (TAC),<sup>39</sup> and, on the other, to Pope John Paul II's recent encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio* (1990) (RM 18). The conclusions explain: "If the Church is the sacrament of the Kingdom, the reason is that she is the sacrament of Jesus Christ himself who is the mystery of salvation, to whom she is called to bear witness and whom she is called to announce. To be at the service of the Kingdom means for the Church to announce Jesus Christ" (33).

Coming to the "evangelising mission of the local churches" (36-37), the conclusions note, after the document "Dialogue and Mission" (1984)<sup>40</sup> of the Secretariat for non-Christians that the evangelising mission is "a single but complex and articulated reality" (DM 13). Speaking of the relationship, within this single mission, between dialogue and proclamation, the conclusions observe, following the more recent dicasterial document on "Dialogue and Proclamation" (1991),<sup>41</sup> that "dialogue . . . does not constitute the whole mission of the Church . . . ; it cannot simply replace proclamation but remains oriented toward proclamation is so far as the dynamic process of the Church's evangelising mission reaches in it its climax and fullness (DP 82; cf. RM 55)" (37). While in the Asian context "the Church is called upon to be committed to dialogue in a special way" (39-46), proclamation remains, nevertheless, "necessary and urgent" (47). The theological reasons for this are as follows:

The Holy Spirit, in ways known to God, gives to all human persons the

39. *FABC Papers*, No.48, p. 16.

40. Text in *Bulletin. Secretariatatus pro non Christianis*, n.56; 19(1984/2), pp. 126-141.

41. Text in *Bulletin. Consilium pro dialogo inter religiones*, no.77; 26(1991/2), pp. 210-250.

opportunity of coming into contact with the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ, and thus to obtain salvation (GS 22). The Church, as the visible sign and sacrament of the mystery of salvation, is in a unique position to offer them the opportunity of sharing in this mystery in a fully human way. She alone can convey to them the explicit knowledge of Jesus Christ their Saviour and Lord and invite them to celebrate in joy and thanksgiving the mystery of his passover at the eucharistic table. Only in the life of the Church is found the full visibility of the mystery of salvation. Only there do the children of God come to the full realization of what it means to share in the Sonship of the Son. Thereby the Church's proclamation meets the deepest longings and aspirations of the human heart for liberation and wholeness of life. There the seeds of the Word contained in the religious traditions of the world grow to maturity and come to fulfilment. In this manner the Church shares with others, "the fullness of the benefits and means of salvation" (RM 18) which she has received from her Lord and Master (49)

### Conclusion

The recent encyclical letter of Pope John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, on "The Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate" (1990), while recognising the "positive aspects" of a Reign of God perspective on mission, has drawn the attention to possible dangers and shortcomings. "Regno-centrism" may not be allowed to substitute either for "Christocentrism", or for "ecclesiocentrism" (17). The Reign of God, as we know it from revelation, "cannot be detached either from Christ or from the Church" (18). For, on the one hand, it is in Jesus Christ that the Reign of God "became present and was fulfilled;" on the other, "Christ endowed the Church, his Body, with the fullness of the benefits and means of salvation . . . Hence the Church's special connection with the Kingdom of God and of Christ" (18). While focusing on the Reign of God may legitimately broaden the perspective of the Church's mission, it cannot be made to result in a "change of paradigm" that would undermine the centrality of Christ and the sacramental function of the Church.<sup>42</sup>

The same encyclical considers the "inculturation" of the Christian life and message as a need which today is particularly urgent (52); it recognises inter-religious dialogue as "part" and "an expression" of the evangelising mission of the Church (55), and the promotion of man and of all persons as "closely connected" with it

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42. See J. DUPUIS, "The Kingdom of God and World Religions," *Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection*, 51(1987) 530-544.

(59). But it stresses "the central and irreplaceable role," even "the permanent priority," of the proclamation of Jesus Christ (44).

The evidence put forward in these pages will have shown that the official documents of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences over the last two decades are on both counts in substantial agreement with the papal encyclical. There are, no doubt, between the ones and the other, distinct shades of meaning and different emphases, as indeed similar differences exist between the various FABC documents themselves, not all of which have the same focus or the same authority. But, these differences notwithstanding, the Reign of God perspective which in recent years has received increased emphasis has broadened and deepened the thrust of the FABC theology of mission. As for the "mission dialogue," with its threefold dimension, which the FABC documents have consistently stressed to be an urgent task of the Asian local churches, it is affirmed without prejudice to the irreplaceable role of proclamation in the Church's evangelising mission.

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## Proclamation Restated and Revitalized in relation to New Apostolates

S.J. EMMANUEL

Reflecting on the recent documents of the Magisterium Fr Emmanuel, Rector of the St Francis Xavier's Seminary, Columbuthurai, Jaffna, Sri Lanka, and member of the Theological Advisory Commission of the FABC, stresses that the need for dialogue, human development and inculturation in no way detract or go against the primacy within the Church's mission of the proclamation of Jesus Christ and His Gospel. Proclamation requires a spirit of faith nourished by prayer. The paper thus continues the reflections on mission started earlier this year in VJTR

**A**t the Second Vatican Council, the Church opened herself to God and His world in many new ways and experienced an outpouring of the Spirit for the renewal of her life and her mission. The openness to the world of religions and cultures, to new peoples and to the realities of their life in the modern world, naturally brought in *new challenges and opportunities for a new evangelizing mission of the Church.*

The Church was consequently led to an irreversible *commitment to new forms of apostolate*, such as human development, liberation from oppressive realities, the evangelisation of cultures, inculturation, interreligious dialogue, etc. These apostolates were understood in Vatican II as part of the one evangelizing mission of the Church. From then on the magisterium has continued to encourage and further these activities by its teachings and by the creation of the necessary structures at all levels of the Church.

Although Vatican II has firmly stated the commitment of the Church to the proclamation of Christ and the building of local churches (AG 6c, f), some later developments tend to have adverse effects on such proclamation.



In the decades following Vatican II, exaggerated criticism of the old missionary methods and their colonial attitudes, their conversion methods and their alienating consequences, discouraged many of the younger generation of priests and religious from direct missionary activity. On the other hand, the rise of post-colonial governments in the new nations of Asia and Africa accompanied by the resurgence of a fresh nationalism helped the revival of old religions and cultures and even earned special privileges for them. Some of the new nations of Asia and Africa rejected foreign missionaries and restrained, or even prohibited, missionary activities such as conversion work, opening of new churches or mission-centres, etc.

This was particularly true of the younger churches of Africa and Asia. Living in a context of inhuman poverty and underdevelopment, and at the same time blessed with ancient religio-cultural richness, these churches took up the new challenges and opportunities in the evangelizing mission with a post-conciliar euphoria. Many of the "foreign missionaries" still left in the younger churches as well as the younger indigenous clergy preferred to channel their missionary zeal into the new forms of apostolate such as human development, inculturation and interreligious dialogue.

These developments had a cumulative effect on the traditional missionary activity. The new apostolates in some way collide with the main missionary task of proclamation. Excessive enthusiasm coupled with the obstacles met led to adverse consequences for the direct proclamation of Jesus Christ and His Gospel.

### *Need for Theological Clarifications*

In order to rectify such harmful tendencies, it is important go back to the basis and intentions given by Vatican II for the new forms of apostolate, clearly restate their place in the total evangelizing mission of the Church and clarify their relation to explicit or direct proclamation of Jesus Christ, His message and His Kingdom. A theological clarification of these connected elements of the "one single but complex reality" of the evangelising mission of the Church, will put each apostolate on a firm foundation and maintain the primacy of direct proclamation in evangelising mission of the Church.

If the *new evangelisation* envisaged by John Paul II on the eve of the third millennium both in the older churches of the North and in the younger churches of the Southern hemisphere is to be a reality, theological clarity about the indispensability, interrelation and

order of the various aspects of the mission is urgent.

Today the Church must face other challenges and push forward to new frontiers, both in the initial mission *ad gentes* and in the new evangelisation of those peoples who have already heard Christ proclaimed (RM 30).

### *Interreligious Dialogue*

Interreligious dialogue has its firm basis on the recognition and appreciation given by the Church to salvific truths and values in other religions (LG 16; NA 1, 2). The magisterium has consistently promoted this dialogue in various forms (Paul VI's Secretariat for Non-Christians; the 1984 Plenary Assembly document, "The Attitude of the Church towards the Followers of Other Religions;" John Paul II's *Redemptoris Missio*, 55-57; Dialogue and Proclamation ...).

In the case of churches which are minorities amidst a strong multireligious environment, some priests and religious, discouraged by the obstacles to direct proclamation, retreated to mere pastoral care of the "older parishes" and almost abandoned any efforts at breaking new ground for Jesus Christ and His Church. Others, still a minority, are growing in their enthusiasm for the new apostolate of interreligious dialogue.

As a result, the genuine concern for those outside the Church and the urgency for proclaiming Jesus Christ and His Gospel to them has suffered a setback. Hence the concern of Church in recent times to restate more forcibly the permanent validity of the mandate to proclaim Jesus Christ and His gospel to all the peoples.

Happily the theological clarification needed for proclamation and dialogue has been well made by the recent Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* of John Paul II and the document called *Dialogue and Proclamation*, issued by the Pontifical Council for Dialogue in collaboration with the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples. They have jointly gone a long way to dispel the doubts about proclamation and dialogue and to establish their necessity and mutual relationship. Further, they have refounded and reoriented the two important and absolute elements of the one evangelizing mission of the Church in a new and stronger way, in the direction and according to the intentions of Vatican II.

These two documents boost up in a new way "the post-Vatican II missionary activity" of proclamation and dialogue. There is no option for one or the other (DP 6), there is only an emphasis of one

or the other according to places and times.

Proclamation and dialogue, both done with a genuine attitude of openness to the Spirit, out of love of Jesus Christ and His Gospel and with a sincere concern, respect and appreciation for the others (DP 14), cannot contradict one another. *They are the two authentic, necessary and legitimate elements of the one evangelizing mission of the Church, intimately related but not interchangeable* (cf RM 55; DP 2,77). Dialogue should neither pretend to constitute the whole mission of the Church, nor simply replace proclamation, but remains oriented towards proclamation (cf. RM 82).

### *Other New Apostolates*

But there are other apostolates too which when misunderstood or exaggerated impinge adversely on proclamation. We mention them briefly.

Although service to humanity has been recognized in Vatican II, in the Synods and in the Papal teachings as part of the *integral evangelisation* of peoples, still this social dimension of the evangelizing mission has not to stifle, least of all replace, the primary task of the proclamation of the Gospel. Proclamation of Jesus Christ and His Kingdom remains as the specific mission of the Church, while preparing the way for the coming of the Kingdom by way of human development is a general task open also to interreligious collaboration. The classic option of the apostles of the early Church for the preaching of the word in preference to serving at tables must not be forgotten.

"A commitment to peace, justice, human rights and human promotion is also a witness to the Gospel when it is a sign of concern for persons and is directed towards integral human development" (Paul VI, *Pop. Progressio*, 21,42). But the same Pontiff firmly reminds us that "evangelisation will always contain — as the foundation, centre and at the same time the summit of its dynamism — a clear proclamation that, in Jesus Christ . . . salvation is offered to all peoples, as a gift of God's grace and mercy" (*Ev.Nuntiandi*, 27).

The Church is committed to incarnate Jesus Christ and His message in the language and culture of the people as well as to evangelize and bring to perfection the positive values in these cultures (cf. AG 22). Consequently there has been a growing consensus in the Church that the local churches in order to fulfil their evangelising mission have to inculturate themselves in keeping with the religio-

cultural heritage of their places. But unfortunately an over-enthusiasm for inculturation has resulted in a confusion of means with the end. The "wonderful exchange between the churches and the riches of the nations" should not cloud our vision of the fundamental mission of the Church, namely, the missionary mandate to proclaim Jesus Christ and His Gospel. In fact all our efforts at inculturation must aim at making Jesus Christ and His message more understood and appreciated by the people as well as their cultures to be effectively illuminated, purified, strengthened and ennobled by the light of the Gospel (cf. LG 13b; AG 22d).

With respect to these apostolates of human development and inculturation there arises the urgency for more theological clarification which could be done again by collaboration between the respective organs of the magisterium.

But theological clarification alone would not suffice for effective proclamation of Jesus Christ and His Gospel in the new evangelisation programme. Something more profound is still needed.

### *Proclamation out of a Faith and Courage Nourished by Prayer*

For proclamation to retain its due place as "foundation, centre and summit of evangelisation" amidst the other necessary elements of evangelisation, besides theological clarification it requires *a strong and personal faith nourished by prayer*.

An unquestionable faith is the basic need — faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour of the world, in His Kingdom as the ultimate plan for the salvation of all, in His Church as the necessary agent for this mission. Such a faith, indispensable for proclamation, cannot be the product of theological clarity. It is a gift of God obtained and sustained by prayer — incessant and personal prayer. The well-spring of one's fervour for proclamation and zeal for the building of the Church is in one's faith sustained by prayer. More than anything else, it is lack of personal faith and missionary courage sustained by persevering prayer that dampens direct proclamation.

Only a man of faith and prayer can generate that missionary courage of St Paul (Acts 18:9-16) and the necessary attitude for proclaiming Jesus Christ to brethren of other faiths. By her proclamation the Church has no intention of denigrating or denouncing religions and their heritage (cf. NA 5c). She clearly expresses her profound respect and appreciation of the truth and sanctity in them.

But moved by a deeper conviction of the mandate she received from God and by that Pauline courage that she has something specific of the Spirit to offer to people of other faiths (Acts 19:1-8), she proclaims Christ, and does it in season and out of season, always and everywhere.

Her proclamation is not directed against religions, religious heritages and cultures. It is directed against the elimination of evil, dispelling the darkness of sin and promoting the salvation of all (cf. LG 16d). This is not an easy attitude to develop nor an easy task to be accomplished (DP 89) because it is based on the mysterious plan of God for the salvation of humanity. We who are called by revelation in Jesus Christ must rely on our faith and our living contact with Him in prayer. And for this reason, we conclude that theological clarity is necessary for our faith-vision of the mysterious plan of God, but it is a faith sustained by the grace of prayer (DP 89) that can revitalize and encourage us to proclaim Jesus Christ and His message of salvation to the world around us.

"Today, as in the past, that mission is difficult and complex and demands *the courage and light of the Spirit* . . . Now, as then, we must *pray that God will grant us boldness in preaching the Gospel*. . . ." (RN 87d).

## Wanted: An International Public Authority. The UNO or the USA as "World Policeman"?

Vimal TIRIMANNA, C.Ss.R.

With the disintegration of the former Soviet Union and the Non-Aligned Movement the USA, the sole surviving superpower, is usurping the role of the UNO. After the Gulf War, the turning point of recent world events, the USA has consistently used the UNO to achieve its own goals. In the process the UNO has lost credibility. This manipulation betrays the hope expressed by recent Popes and official Church teachings for an international public authority. Later political events in relation to India seem to confirm the fears expressed in this article written in early 1992. Fr Tirimanna is doing his doctoral studies in the Alphonsian Academy, Rome.

**T**he driving out of Saddam Hussein's forces from Kuwait, the success of the outgoing UN Secretary General, Perez de Cuellar in getting the Western hostages in the Middle East released, the end of Cold War, etc., have prompted some to say that the year 1991 finally enabled the United Nations Organization to achieve the noble ends for which it was established. *Asia Focus* for example, had the following words in its issue of October, 1991:

Many years from now, historians might consider 1991 as, among other things, the year the United Nations finally won the respect it needed to fulfil its lofty aspiration to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war."<sup>1</sup>

Whether it was the UNO which fulfilled its "aspirations" or whether it was some other power (the USA) which achieved its "goals" is an interesting question to be considered, and this is exactly the purpose of this article.

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1. "From the Editors," *Asia Focus*, October 25, 1991, p.6.

## 1. The Need for an International Public Authority

Official Church teachings have consistently called for a kind of "Universal Authority" which could resolve conflicts between nations. Pope John XXIII wrote in 1963, in *Pacem in Terris*:

Today the universal common good presents us with problems which are worldwide in their dimensions: problems, therefore, which cannot be solved except by a public authority with power, organization and means coextensive with those problems, and with a worldwide sphere of activity. Consequently, the moral order itself demands the establishment of some such general form of public authority.<sup>2</sup>

The Second Vatican Council also gave the following indications:

It is our clear duty to spare no effort in order to work for the moment when all war will be completely outlawed by international agreement. This goal, of course, requires the establishment of a universally acknowledged public authority vested with the effective power to ensure security for all, regard for justice, and respect for law.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. The Birth of the UNO

The United Nations Organization seems fit to have precisely such a "universal public authority" as envisaged by the Church teachings. The name "United Nations" was used during World War II to denote the nations allied against Germany, Italy and Japan, and later was adopted as the name of the postwar world organization.<sup>4</sup> The Declaration of the United Nations, signed by 26 states on the 1st of January, 1942, set forth the war aims of the Allied powers. The first major step towards the formulation of a permanent organization was taken at the conference held from August 21 to October 7 in 1944, at Dumbarton Oaks, in Washington, D.C. At the Yalta Conference, Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin agreed that the new agency would include a trusteeship system to succeed the League of Nations mandate system. The Dumbarton Oaks proposals, as modified at the Yalta Conference, formed thus the basis of negotiations at the United Nations Conference on International Organization (UNCIO), which convened at San Francisco on April 25, 1945, and drafted the Charter of the United Nations which was originally signed by 51 nations.<sup>5</sup>

The first article of the Charter outlines the purposes of the or-

2. *Pacem in Terris*, No.46.

3. *Gaudium et spes*, No.82.

4. *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol.18. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica Inc., 1984, (15th edition), p.894.

5. Ibid.

ganization, declaring that the primary objective of the United Nations is the maintenance of international peace and security.<sup>6</sup> Ever since its foundation, the UNO has been successful in preventing a World War III, and also in bringing about peaceful settlements and ceasefires in some of the "minor" wars in various parts of the world. However, it has been unable so far to achieve its goals of peace in places like Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia (?), China, Cyprus, Korea, Nicaragua, Yugoslavia and of course, in the Middle East. No doubt this failure could be attributed mainly to the *cold war* that almost incapacitated the UNO for years with the world split into two ideological camps. However, with the crumbling of the Soviet Union, the dark shadows of the cold war have disappeared, making the United States the sole "super power" in the world. The term "super power" itself is a product of the cold war.<sup>7</sup>

It described the way the two adversarial nuclear-weapons states related to each other. The superpowers were not simply old-fashioned "great powers" with ICBMs. They were not interested in the politics of shifting alliances, of playing countries against each other to achieve some global balance. Each superpower claimed to be a model for the rest of the world, and sought worldwide dominance in the ideological sphere. Each had a military capacity that controlled the fate of humankind. Each brought to the conflict what Zbigniew Brzezinski calls "an unprecedented degree of intellectual self-righteousness." All this gave both countries a sense of mission transcending mere national interests. It was precisely this rivalry that defined the United States and the Soviet Union as superpowers. Without it, the category "superpower" is drained of meaning. It is a dialectical concept: either there are two superpowers, or there are none.<sup>8</sup>

It is true that the term "superpower" is a dialectical concept in the sense that "either there are *two* superpowers or there are none." But, it is also true that when *only* one of those superpowers crumbles and disintegrates (as in the case of the Soviet Union), the other not only continues to be a "superpower," but even dominates international affairs, simply because it has remained intact and there is no other "rival" to check its dominance. This is exactly what we are seeing ever since the Soviet Union began to disintegrate.

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6. *Ibid.*

7. Peter McGrath, "The Lonely Superpower" in *Newsweek*, October 7th, 1991, p.18.

8. *Ibid.*



### 3. Usurping the Role of the UNO

Earlier, we mentioned that the UNO seems to fit into the role of the "universal public authority" to maintain world peace. But of late, especially with the process of disintegration of the Soviet Union, the USA seems to have automatically assumed the responsibilities of "*the Universal Policeman*," thus usurping the role of the UNO, and even using the UNO to achieve its own goals. Let me illustrate this by some of the events of the last year especially with regard to the Gulf War:

(i) When Saddam Hussein violated international law and brutally invaded Kuwait on 2nd of August, 1990, no world leader who was so upset as President Bush. Whatever his motive in bringing about "justice" to this "raping of Kuwait," George Bush responded to Saddam's naked aggression" by imposing an embargo on most US trade with Iraq and by freezing \$30 billion worth of Iraqi and Kuwaiti assets in the United States.<sup>9</sup> He did not stop there:

Bush worked the phones trying to rally timid Arab leaders against Saddam and pleading for help from other democracies. On the face of it, he got impressive support. The European Community imposed an embargo on oil from Iraq and Kuwait. Even the cautious Japanese froze some assets Saddam seized. The United Nations Security Council demanded immediate unconditional Iraqi withdrawal, threatening to impose mandatory sanctions if Saddam refused. The Soviet Union, Saddam's biggest arms supplier, abruptly cut him off. A day later, the Soviets joined the Americans in an unprecedented declaration calling for an international embargo on all arms supplies to Iraq.<sup>10</sup>

So, from the very outset it turned out to be a duel between the USA and Iraq (Saddam v. Bush), rather than the UNO v. Iraq.

(ii) In fact, between Saddam's illegitimate invasion of Kuwait, and November 30, 1990, the UNO had passed 12 resolutions against Iraq, the latest of which caused the heightening of tension.<sup>11</sup> On November 30, the Security Council of the UNO passed resolution No. 678, approving the use of a military strike against Iraq. This was only the second time the Council had sanctioned the use of force, the first being the Korean War in 1950.<sup>12</sup> At the insistence of

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9. John BARRY and Theodore STANGER, "Baghdad's Bully" in *Newsweek*, August 13th, 1990, p.12.

10. *Ibid.*

11. Nona V. SAN PEDRO, "Gulf Crisis: Prospects and Retrospects," *Pahatid*, p.8.

12. *Ibid.*

the Americans, Iraq was given a deadline — January 15, 1991 — to withdraw unconditionally.

Days before the resolution was passed, the US had actively courted the votes of the Security Council members to favour the resolution:

President George Bush even met with the Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen. This was the first diplomatic meeting between the two countries since the US's strong condemnation of the Tiananmen massacre last year. US hinted to China the possibility of lifting the sanctions imposed on the latter after its violent crackdown of students' protests. Even Zaire and Romania had their eyes on the economic incentives and aid by the US for the resolution's support. Secretary of State James Baker spent ten days winning the support for the resolution by meeting and convincing the Security Council's foreign ministers.<sup>13</sup>

Among the basic principles of the United Nations as outlined in Article 2 of the Charter are the following: disputes are to be settled by peaceful means; members undertake not to use force or the threat of force in contravention of the purposes of the United Nations.<sup>14</sup> In passing the above resolution against Iraq, the Security Council seemed to have ignored such basic principles altogether.

Besides, in the eyes of some, it is a gross violation of the UN charter. Thus, for example, Bruce Kent could write:

What we have seen in the passing of that resolution and its subsequent use is a gross abuse of the UN Charter so as to produce a result acceptable to the remaining superpower. Specifically, Resolution 678 could not possibly have authorized the military action now in progress. It did not have the concurring vote of China, a permanent Security Council member, as required by Article 27.3 of the Charter.

Even if considered legitimate, it could not be thought to authorize military action because Article 42 of the Charter makes it clear that before moving on to military action, the Security Council has to consider that non-military actions under Article 41 "would be inadequate or have proved to be inadequate." The Security Council has never met to give consideration to the effect of sanctions and its sanctions committee has been ignored.<sup>15</sup>

(iii) It is the USA (in the form of President Bush), and not the UNO (or the Secretary General), who decided that Iraq had to abide by the UN resolutions, while totally ignoring the similar situation

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13. *Ibid.*

14. *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, p.894.

15. Bruce KENT, "War in the Gulf" in *The Tablet*, 23rd February, 1991, p.238.

where Israel also had to abide by the UN resolutions calling for a settlement in the Middle East. There have been more than 160 UN Security Council resolutions, along with 400 more by the UN General Assembly, concerning Israel, since 1947.<sup>16</sup> In fact, when Saddam was insisting that there was "a link" between the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and Israel's occupation of the Arab lands, including its invasion of Lebanon, Bush went all out to deny of any such linkage whatsoever. On this hypocrisy of the USA, the eminent moral theologian Kevin Kelly had this to write:

How genuine is the authority and respect currently being accorded to the recent UN resolutions dealing with the Gulf crisis? Is it due to an emerging consensus that an effective United Nations is essential for the peaceful coexistence of the family of nations in our 'one world'? In other words, is it based on a growing agreement that the common good of all peoples calls for some kind of world authority with the role of seeing that justice is observed between nations and enabling disputes to be settled peacefully without any need to resort to the obscenity of war?

Or is the current respect for these UN resolutions due to the fact that they coincide with the interests of the United States and those whose wellbeing in one way or another is 'linked' to that of the US (and that includes Europe and the Soviet Union!)? That might seem a cynical question to pose. Nevertheless, it is a crucial one. If linkage is as central as I suggest, then it would be the height of cynicism to give the impression of investing the highest authority in the United Nations while in reality only supporting its resolutions because they happen to coincide with one's own interests. I would even dare to suggest that in present circumstances that would be a particularly heinous crime against humanity!

In the battle of words that preceded the current outbreak of hostilities, President Bush and most Western leaders denied most emphatically that there is any linkage between authoritative, binding UN resolutions with regard to Israel's occupation of the West Bank and those demanding the Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. That must be challenged. There is a linkage and it is rooted deep in our guts. In each case 'our people', men and women linked to us by our shared humanity, are being treated inhumanly. Their and our humanity is being violated. There is a direct link from this gut-feeling right up to the authority of the United Nations. To deny the linkage as forthrightly as we in the West have done undermines the authority of the United Nations and gives Saddam Hussein the semblance of high moral ground to which he has no claim.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Maria V. SAN PEDRO, *Op.cit.*, p.8.

<sup>17</sup> Kevin T. KELLY, "Christians and Linkage," in *The Month*, February, 1991, p.67.

(iv) It was also the USA, and not the UNO, which decided when to begin the war and when to end it:

Certainly nothing in the Charter gives the Security Council the right to hand over its military powers to individual states in such a way that the United Nations ceases to have a further role. That is what has happened. Mr Bush, not the Secretary General, apparently now has the right to decide on the acceptability or otherwise of the recent "peace" offer from Iraq.<sup>18</sup>

(v) Again, it was the USA and not the UNO which decided whether to solve the conflict through negotiations or not. All efforts to resolve the Iraq-Kuwait conflict through negotiations (including Iraq's own proposals, the Arabs-only solution, the European and the Soviet initiatives) were brushed aside.<sup>19</sup> The United Nations (whose job it is to avoid war and to arrange a ceasefire if war breaks out) was used to legitimise war and further used, as the war moved on towards a conclusion, to reject a ceasefire or negotiations.<sup>20</sup>

(vi) Originally, the purpose of the war was said to be "the liberation of Kuwait." When Kuwait was actually "liberated," the purpose of the war seemed to have changed to the removal of Saddam Hussein from power! President Bush openly called for the overthrow of Saddam Hussein,<sup>21</sup> and continued to insist that 'the UN sanctions' against Iraq would continue until this all-important goal is achieved.

The United States has a loathing for Saddam Hussein, and good reason to see him go; it would dearly like him to be deposed by his Iraqi challengers and replaced by democratic elements. To this end Washington is denying Iraq a ceasefire and crucial relief from economic sanctions that a ceasefire would start to bring. Explicitly, it is asking for onerous concessions, including acceptance of liability for war damages. Implicitly, it is playing for time to help the dissidents advance.<sup>22</sup>

Consequently, the USA managed to get the UN Security Council to continue the sanctions against Iraq (in spite of the sufferings caused to the ordinary Iraqis as a result of the total destruction of

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18. Bruce KENT, *op.cit.*, p.238.

19. Khor Kok PENG, "Brutal End to Gulf War leaves Unanswered Questions" in *Christian Worker*, May 1991, p.22.

20. *Ibid.*

21. Ahmad CHALABI, "Now Help the Iraqis to Govern Themselves" in *International Herald Tribune*, March 13th, 1991, p.4.

22. "Without Saddam Hussein" in *International Herald Tribune*, March 13th, 1991, p.4.

the infra-structure of that country by relentless allied bombing during the war<sup>23</sup> in order to achieve this goal. Thus, the UNO was once again a puppet in the hands of the USA.

(vii) Just after the ending of the Gulf War, Saddam Hussein brutally suppressed a Kurdish uprising, using most inhuman means, and as a result, thousands of Kurds fled Iraq. It was then that the closest American ally in the Gulf War, the British Prime Minister John Major, came up with the idea of setting up Kurdish refugee camps within Iraq with Western military backing, whether Iraq agreed to this idea or not. The immediate response of the UN Secretary General, Javier Perez de Cuellar, was that Baghdad should be consulted before foreign troops are sent into northern Iraq to help protect the Kurdish refugee camps.

Nevertheless, this unprecedented move was whole-heartedly backed by the USA and with the help of other Western allies like France, such camps were set up amidst strong protests from Iraq. This certainly amounted to an "intervention" in a foreign territory:

The United States, in conjunction with its West European partners, including the Federal Republic of Germany, does not merely distribute humanitarian aid to refugees in Turkey and Iran. American soldiers are protecting Kurds on Iraqi territory with gun in hand. In international law, that is called "intervention." It is interference in a state's domestic matters with the goal to force it to execute certain actions. Intervention in domestic matters with the use of force is only justified when a state wants to maintain its rights and protect its own citizens. If (the US action in Iraq) becomes an accepted model for example within the United Nations Security Council, it would make a dent in the international prohibition of intervention. The first principle of the international order, which the United Nations charter says is "derived from the sovereign equality of all its members," would have to be questioned.<sup>25</sup>

Then, British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd proposed to his European colleagues that the job of policing these camps in northern Iraq should be handed over to a UN force.<sup>26</sup> The UN Secretary

23. Barton GELLMAN, "Gulf Air War's Larger Target," in *International Herald Tribune*, 24th June, 1991, p.3.

24. Alan RIDING, "UN Chief Urges Consultations With Iraq" in *International Herald Tribune*, 19th April, 1991, p.1.

25. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* as quoted by *International Herald Tribune*, 30th April, 1991.

26. *The Daily Telegraph* (London) as quoted by *The International Herald Tribune*, 30th April, 1991.

General insisted that a new UN Secretary Council resolution would be necessary if the camps were to be established under a United Nations flag.<sup>27</sup>

However, the Bush administration disagreed. The White House press secretary, Marlin Fitzwater, said American officials believed that UN resolution 688 provided "full authority."<sup>28</sup> He acknowledged that there might be some dispute with Mr Perez de Cuellar, but said that President George Bush did not intend to seek approval from the Security Council.<sup>29</sup> Mr Fitzwater was quoted as saying: "It is a cardinal rule that if you don't need it don't ask."<sup>30</sup> This alone shows the high-handedness with which the USA ignored the UNO, and also used it whenever it served its own purposes.

(viii) Finally when it came to the nuclear weapons of Iraq, which the Western allies themselves helped Saddam to build-up,<sup>31</sup> the USA led a campaign calling for the destruction of all nuclear build-up in Iraq saying it was a potential danger to the entire region, at the same time forgetting the nuclear weapons of Israel (its ally), which have been constantly posing a threat to all its Arab neighbours. The Americans also managed to get through a UN resolution calling Iraq to meet all the expenses in the process of this destruction.

And then, the USA got the UN Security Council to pass an unprecedented resolution calling on the Iraqis to agree to allow UN helicopters to make unrestricted inspection flights in search of weapons of mass destruction.<sup>32</sup> When Iraq opposed these moves, the USA, Britain and France drew up contingency plans to establish "a forward base within Iraq" from which future searches for Iraq's nuclear, chemical and ballistic weapons would be carried out.<sup>33</sup> These plans involved *painting UN insignia on US helicopters*, using attack helicopters and warplanes to escort them within Iraq.<sup>34</sup> An-

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27. Alan RIDING, *Ibid.*

28. *Ibid.*

29. *Ibid.*, quoting Associated Press report.

30. *Ibid.*

31. Mark WHITAKER, *et al.* "Avoiding the Next Crisis," *Newsweek*, March 11, 1991, p.43.

32. Patrick COCKBURN and Leonard DOYLE, "UN team 'has uncovered Iraqi nuclear arms plan'," in *The Independent*, 25th September, 1991, p.1.

33. Leonard DOYLE, "Allies propose an inspection 'enclave' in Iraq," in *The Independent*, 25th September, 1991, p.10.

34. *Ibid.*

other proposal discussed under these plans was for the allies to seize an Iraqi military air-field and to establish an armed stockade from which future inspection teams would leave.<sup>35</sup>

This is one of the best illustrations of how the USA *usurped* the role of the UNO during and after the Gulf crisis.

There are also other instances besides the Gulf War, where the USA seemed during the past year to have automatically assumed the responsibilities of the UNO. Briefly listed below are just a few of them:

(1) In the Yugoslavian conflict, the US Secretary of State, James Baker, dashed into Belgrade as early as June, on "a peace mission,"<sup>36</sup> long before the EEC or the UNO efforts to bring about peace.

(2) The historic Middle-East peace conference in Madrid was sponsored by the USA, and the UNO was only an observer at the conference.

(3) According to the conventional understanding of the UNO, the post of the Secretary General should have been passed on to an African this time. But, none of the black African candidates was acceptable to the USA. Finally, there were two contestants from the African continent. Egypt's Boutros Ghali and Zimbabwe's Bernard Chidzero. Because of Zimbabwe's "Marxist orientation," and because of Egypt's close support for the Bush administration especially during the Gulf War, the USA campaigned for the Egyptian vice-Prime Minister (strictly speaking, also from the African continent) as a compromise candidate, and got him nominated for the top UNO post.

It should not be forgotten that Ghali was mainly responsible for pulling Arab allies into the coalition that fought Iraq's Saddam Hussein over Kuwait.<sup>38</sup> In the American eyes, this alone merited him the UNO post. It is also worth noting for the purpose of this article that on the day before the UN vote, Ghali met in Paris with John Bolton, the US Assistant Secretary of State for international organizations.<sup>39</sup> "According to an American source, Ghali told Bolton he could not

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35. *Ibid.*

36. Tony EMERSON and others, "Voice of America," *Newsweek*, 1st July, 1991, p.10.

37. Pascal PRIVAT and others, "The UN Man of Many Parts," *Newsweek*, 2nd December, 1991, p.16.

38. *Ibid.*

39. *Ibid.*

succeed in the job without US support and *would do nothing to contradict US interests.*"<sup>40</sup>

(4) The USA lobbied hard to repeal the UNO resolution that equalled Zionism to Racism (passed in the 1970's by the General Assembly), and thus succeeded in appeasing its closest Middle East ally Israel.

(5) On the eve of the total disintegration of the former Soviet Union with the stepping down of President Gorbachev, the US Secretary of State hurried to the former Soviet republics to get assurances that their international policies, especially the use of nuclear weaponry, would not be out of step with those of the USA.

#### 4. "A New World Order"?

Ever since the Gulf crisis, President Bush has been calling for "a new world order." Considering the American involvement in the events enlisted above (during the past year alone!), one wonders whether this is another name for the USA usurping the authority of the UNO. Even if one were to concentrate only on recent history, it is evident that the USA is the least qualified to assume the role of "universal public authority." The invasions of Grenada and Panama, the support for the Contras to overthrow the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, the bombing of Tripoli to assassinate the Libyan leader Qaddafi, the open partiality shown to the Israelites in the Middle East, the massacre of Iraq and its infrastructure in an unsuccessful bid to oust Saddam Hussein, etc., are sufficient proofs that the Americans have no right to claim responsibility for "ordering" world affairs. But, with ample support from the dominant western mass media and her own economic and military power, the USA continues to follow a self-righteous foreign policy that is bent on making the rest of the world, especially the Third World nations, subservient to it. Here, one is reminded of the words written by the famous American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr in the 1940's, in a somewhat similar context just after the Second World War:

It ought to be particularly significant for those who hold a Christian faith and who look at the world in terms of Christian insights that political issues are continually confused by all sorts of simple illusions, all of which contain the basic illusion that it is possible for some group of men or nations, either by virtue of superior intelligence or by virtue of a superior economic organization, to overcome the sinfulness of the human heart and achieve some vantage point of perfection from which

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40. *Ibid.*



they can look down upon the evil world.<sup>41</sup>

However, whether we like it or not, with the demise of the Soviet Union, and also with the disintegration of the Movement of the Non-aligned Nations, the original world order is destabilized, and a re-grouping or a re-ordering of alliances is on the cards. The apparently successful US model of economy and the US aid packages have been strong incentives to the Third World nations to toe the line with the Americans. But, does that mean that they have to dance according to the tune played by the USA? A serious study of the recent world events would indicate that this was exactly what was happening, especially within the UNO. One cannot imagine even a single international event where the will of the USA has not been carried out by the UNO. But, in the process, the credibility of the authority of the UNO is diminished. This was well illustrated in some of the articles written during the Gulf war:

So now in the midst of the Gulf confrontation there needs to be on the allied side — if it is not already too late — a clear and ringing statement of intention to bring about a new and better order for the Middle East after the war is over. It should come not from the Americans but from the United Nations. For one of the many frightening dangers of this war is that instead of emerging from it stronger as the accepted instrument of international security and solidarity in the wake of the cold war, the United Nations might instead be seen as the instrument and cloak of American power and in consequence be distrusted and spurned by the Arabs and the Africans.<sup>42</sup>

As this paper is being written, a Summit Meeting of the UNO Security Council is being held in New York. On the eve of its opening, the British Prime Minister, John Major, gave an interview to the BBC. When the question of revising the composition of the Security Council membership was posed, Mr Major quipped: "A winning team need not be changed!"<sup>43</sup> This alone goes to illustrate how the western leaders perceive the role of the UNO. From their point of view it is certainly "a winning team"! But, from the point of view of the rest of the nations (including some western nations like Germany), the composition of the Security Council, especially the role of the so-called "five permanent members," does not reflect

41. Reinhold NIEBUHR, *Christianity and Power Politics*. Archon Books, 1969, pp. 133-134.

42. "After the war is over" (editorial comment), *The Tablet*, 26th January, 1991, p.91. The article by Kevin T. KELLY (already cited above) illustrates the same point.

43. An interview with Mr Major which was broadcast by the BBC on 30.1.92 at 19.45 GMT.

the political situation in the modern world. The picture of the world scene is totally different today from what it was just after the Second World War, when the first Security Council was formed. Today, Japan and Germany rank right behind the United States in economic clout.<sup>44</sup> Then, there are important regional powers, like India, Brazil and Nigeria, who would press their claims to a permanent seat in the Council,<sup>45</sup> and deservedly so. These and other factors indicate clearly that it is high time to think afresh on the composition of the Security Council, especially on the veto-power of a handful of nations.

## Conclusion

As we mentioned at the very outset of this article, the official Church teachings have been consistent in calling for "a universal public authority" that can maintain peace in the world. The UNO that was born just after the Second World War is established exactly to do this job, and there is every reason to believe that given a fair chance, it can do this.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the disintegration of the Movement of the Non-aligned Nations, calls for "a new world order," where every nation is *an equal partner*. However, recent events in the international arena indicate that the USA, the only surviving superpower, tends to assume not only "a leadership role" in world affairs, but also the responsibilities of the UNO onto its own shoulders. The USA even seems to be using the UNO as an instrument to achieve its own ends and interests. This can eventually lead to an erosion of the credibility of the UNO.

The end of the cold war is something that any peace-lover should welcome. The end of Communism as practiced in some countries is also to be welcomed. However, it is doubtful whether the collapse of the Soviet Union as "a superpower" is to be welcomed or not, because the imbalance it creates in the international scene can lead to repercussions that may be worse than the effects of the cold war. A superpower unchecked is certainly worse than two superpowers that check each other. When there is a single superpower, the temptation to usurp "the universal public authority" in world affairs is greater. In such a context, the call by the recent Popes and the Second Vatican Council for "a universal public authority" is just wishful thinking.

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44. Leslie H. GELB, "Let's Take UN Matters Seriously" in *International Herald Tribune*, 4th February, 1992, p.7.

## Basics in Eco-Spirituality

Fr John KULANDAI

In the context of the Rio meeting Fr Kulandai, who teaches theology at St Paul's Seminary (P.B. 36, Tiruchirapalli 620001) offers the outline of an eco-spirituality from a Christian perspective. He stresses the unity of the eco-system of which human beings form part and sees the whole of creation as a sacrament of God; he acknowledges the seriousness of the present ecological crisis which should unite peoples of all faiths and convictions and all continents into common action and brings out the relation of the ecological to the social justice concern thus laying the foundation for a spirituality of eco-restoration.

**T**he ocean is your girdle. Your bosom the mountains! Goddess Earth, my obeissance to you, forgive me for daring to touch you with my feet!" Even as our Prime Minister Narasimha Rao was speaking out these poetic lines at the plenary session of the Earth Summit at Rio de Janerio on 12 June 1992,<sup>1</sup> thousands of trees were being cut down in his own country and even forests were being wiped out at the direction of its leaders, valleys were being turned into (Tehri) Dams, efforts were still on to create new nuclear power stations (Kudankulam), nuclear wastes and radio-active garbage were being dumped into the rivers and seas and thousands of factories were vomiting smoke into the atmosphere to pollute the air.

The Rio Summit brought together a large galaxy of world leaders and more than 30000 delegates coming from 178 participating countries. The ecological problem is a matter of pressing concern. But the conclusion of the conference makes us doubt about the sincerity on the part of leaders in their response to the SOS from the mother earth.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Hindu*, Saturday, 12 June 1992, p.1. Cf. *Dinamani* (Tamil Daily), Thursday, 25 June 1992, p.6. For the anti-eco incongruity involved in the arrangement of the Summit's venue, see Vandana SHIVA "The Road from Rio" in *Frontline*, July 3, 1992, p. 105.

Spirituality is "openness and responsibility vis-à-vis reality." Reality refers to the truth that is, the truths that appear and the truths that are hidden, the extension and depth of reality. Indeed it refers to everything "from sand and stone and the earth, through grass and trees, through worms and birds and their songs, through human beings, their lives, their history, on to the ultimate reality we call God." Openness means letting oneself be affected by these realities, to see one's relatedness to all reality. It is to allow reality "come and invade, enter, disturb, challenge, mould and move us to joy, to tears, to anger, to action."<sup>2</sup>

How does a believer react to the ecological problem? What has Christian faith (in India) to do with environmental well-being (or hazards)? In this article, I would like to answer this question or at least point towards an answer.

The question implies three other questions: First, what does Christian spirituality say about creation? This is a question on the theology of nature. Part I will deal with it. Second, how does Christian spirituality react to the ecological crisis? This will refer not only the cause of the crisis but also to the result of it. I shall speak about it in Part II. The third question to be dealt with Part III, is a logical sequence: What does the Christian spirituality say about eco-restoration?

## Part I: A Christian Theology of Nature

Though references to a theology of creation (of universe, the cosmos, the environment) has been there from the beginning of Christianity, nay, from the day the first verses of the Bible were written, it is nevertheless a new field on which many works still appear.<sup>4</sup> We can draw out the following aspects of this emergent theology.

2. "An Indian Search for a Spirituality of Liberation" in V. FABELLA and others (eds), *Asian Christian Spirituality: Reclaiming Traditions*, New York: Orbis Books, 1992, p. 76.

3. Samuel RAYAN, "An Asian Spirituality of Liberation," *ibid.*, p. 22. Cf. also Hans Urs VON BALTHASAR, "The Gospel as Norm and Test of All Spirituality in the Church" in *Concilium*, 9 (Nov.1965), p.5.

4. See, for example Christopher DERRICK, *The Delicate Creation: Towards a Theology of Environment*, London: Tom Stacey Ltd., 1972; Robert FARICY, *Wind and Sea Obey Him: Approaches to a Theology of Nature*, London: SCM Press, 1982; John CARMODY, *Ecology and Religion: Towards a New Christian Theology of Nature*, New York: Paulist Press, 1983; Mathew FOX, *Original Blessing*, New Mexico: Bear and Company (fourth printing) 1984; J. MOLTMANN, *God in Creation: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation*, London: SCM Press, 1989. For the teaching of the magisterium see Pope John Paul II's Message for the World Day of Peace, January 1, 1990, dated 8 Dec.

### 1. The entire eco-system is one reality

The Judeo-Christian tradition ascribes the origin of the Universe to the creative power of the God of love. The Bible relates in detail how God creates the human beings' whole environment (sea, land, stars, planets, plants, trees, fish, animals). Like an expectant mother God prepares the "oikos" (home) for her offspring to be born.<sup>5</sup> At every point of creating something, she (God as Mother) exclaims in joy: "And God saw that it was good," an expression which not only says that the ecosphere was good in its early state, but also underlines the sheer joy of the mother full of hope and satisfaction (see Gen 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25). After the creation of the human being the happiness of the Mother, reaches the height of expression: "It was very good."<sup>6</sup> In the Indian tradition we have a beautiful word which clearly expresses this "goodness." The word used is "fullness" (*purnam*):

Fullness here, fullness there,  
From fullness comes fullness  
When fullness is taken from fullness,  
Fullness remains: OM, Peace, Peace, Peace.<sup>7</sup>

The Indian tradition sees the whole universe as one reality held together not only by the immanence of the Brahman but also by the presence of an universal order called Rta, which is the Dharma governing all creation and maintaining the "fullness." The whole cosmos is therefore a "fullness" a one connected system.<sup>8</sup>

I would see the "goodness" in the Judeo-Christian creation account and the Fullness in the Hindu tradition as one and the same in import and content. Raimundo Panikkar, brought up in both the Biblical and Hindu traditions, comprehends this when he calls this oneness of vision as a "Cosmotheandric Vision," a vision of reality which sees the universe (cosmos), God (Theos) and the human being

5. Gerald O'COLLINS, *The Theology of Secularity*, Dublin and Cork: The Mercier Press, 1974, p. 41.

6. See Pope JOHN PAUL II, 1990 *Peace Day Message*, no.3. Cf. "When a woman is in travail she has sorrow, because her hour has come; but when she is delivered of the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a child is born into this world" (Jn 16:21).

7. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, 5:2.1.

8. See Dr S. RADHAKRISHNAN, *The Hindu View of Life*, London: Union Books, fourth edition 1965, pp.52-55. These inspiring pages give a new interpretation of the doctrine of karma or fate, at the same time explaining the meaning of rta.

(*anthropos*) as one reality.<sup>9</sup> So, unity is "goodness" and oneness is "wholeness."

The "wholeness" or "oneness" of our ecosphere (or universe) is a matter of daily experience. In fact the "goodness" of nature, the beauty of the *cosmós*, comes from this "oneness." Whenever the equilibrium in nature tilts, there is a danger of nature losing its goodness. There is a menace to all life. In concrete it is shown today in a global warming caused by the increase in the concentration of greenhouse gasses, the depleting of the ozone umbrella and a continuous loss of biodiversity.<sup>10</sup>

## 2. *The human being is part of this one system*

The oneness of the cosmic reality or the "Cosmotheandric Vision" brings to clear light the oneness of the human being with nature. Today we experience that any imbalance in the ecosphere affects the humans. Every movement of every star affects the body and mind of every person. Yes, the human being is nature and to speak of the human's health is to speak of ecological equilibrium.

"You are dust" (Gen 3:19) is not a curse. It is expression of reality. The humans are dust, i.e., earth, soil. For "adam" is formed from "adamah" or earth (see Gen 2:7). Therefore the human being sums up in himself/herself the elements of the world.<sup>11</sup> The intimate relation between the destiny of the human being and that of the universe is shown in this: that the human being's good relationship to God coincides with the harmony in the universe (earth, nature) and the breaking away from God through sin is accompanied by disharmony in the universe. The earth is cursed because of the human being and it brings forth "thorns and thistles" (Gen 3:17-18). The "cosmic covenant" with Noah is another mythological symbol of this close bond: "I set my bow in the cloud and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth" (Gen 9:13).<sup>12</sup>

9. See Raimondo PANIKKAR, "The Ultimate Experience" in *Theology Digest*, 20 (Autumn 1982), pp. 219-232. See also the books of the same author published earlier especially, *The Trinity and the Religious Experience of Man*, New York: Orbis Books, 1974.

10. See *The Hindu*. Monday, June 15, 1992, p.1. The "Greenpeace," the international environmental organization, held a demonstration outside the venue of the Earth Summit to call the attention of the world leaders to the "sins" of humanity which cause imbalance in the ecosphere.

11. Eugene H. MALY, (Commentary on) "Genesis" in *JBC*, Vol.1, p.12.

12. See Livinus DUNGUNG, *Towards an Understanding of Ecological Responsibility* (unpublished doctoral dissertation. Rome: Alfonsiana, 1984) pp. 108-112.

Finally, the moment of the salvation or mukti of the humans, "the glorious liberty of the children of God," is at the same time the fulfilment of the hope of the universe (Rom 8:19-23). When the human is in bondage, the whole nature is "groaning." It groans together with the human being. As the groaning and travail of a woman in labour turns into joy at the birth of a child, the earth is fulfilled in the complete liberation of the humans.<sup>13</sup> Thus,

Man and world are bound together most closely as companions in their fortunes and misfortunes . . . man and the world are one not only in guilt and punishment, but also in redemption and salvation. Man is liberated not from the world but along with the world.<sup>14</sup>

Seen in this perspective, the classical discussion about human beings function vis-a-vis nature, i.e., whether the human being is a master of nature to "subdue it," or whether he/she is only a steward of the "garden" which is given to him/her to till and keep it,<sup>15</sup> has an answer. Both these possible interpretations of the Biblical texts<sup>16</sup> must be seen only within the background of the fact that the human being is part of the nature. Since he/she is part of it, the interpretation of the human being as master of universe who can do what he/she wants<sup>17</sup> is wrong if it is understood as the right to exploit nature. It would be tantamount to harming oneself and therefore suicidal. In the close inter-relationship or, as science says, the 'identity' of the human body with nature, the "cultivation" of nature is but the human's self-promotion and the destruction of nature is human's self-destruction.

### 3. Nature is a sacrament of God

Another light that religion sheds on environment is that the universe is a sacrament of God, a sign of God's enduring immanent

13. Paul probably uses the comparison between the vernal rebirth of nature and woman's travail found in Greek poets. See Joseph FITZMYER, "Commentary on the Letter to the Romans" in *JBC*, Vol.2, p.316. This "yearning" which is the condition of the present world, "is not only true of the world of men and women; it applies to the whole creation" (J. MOLTMANN, *God in Creation*, p. 35. Cf. R.J. RAJA, "As It was in the Beginning," in *Vidyajyoti Journal* 55 [1991], p. 686).

14. Livinus DUNGUNG, *op.cit.*, p.114. See also JOHN PAUL II, 1990. *Peace Day Message*, no.5.

15. According to the interpretation of Gen 1:28, and according to Gen 2:15.

16. See Wilfred FELIX, "Nature and Human Survival" in *Jeevadhara*, 18 (1989), pp. 73-75, specially Part III, 69-72.

17. See, for example, Nahum M. SARNA, *Understanding Genesis*, New York: Schocken Books, 1970, p.15. "This exclusive distinction endows man with power over the animal and vegetable worlds and confers upon him the right, nay the duty, to

presence. "The whole earth is full of His glory" (Is 6:3). God's presence is everywhere. We never "enter" His presence. Rather, we are always in that presence: "Whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend to heaven Thou art there: If I make my bed in Sheol, Thou art there . . ." (Ps 139:8).<sup>18</sup>

This means that the universe has a "mystery" aspect, by which it "leads to a reflection that concedes a greater understanding of the mysteriousness and incomprehensibility of God and His ways."<sup>19</sup> God is present to this universe, to our ecosphere, from inside it. He is revealing Himself from within.<sup>20</sup>

This concept runs through all the books of the Hindu tradition.<sup>21</sup> Dr Radhakrishnan writes very vehemently: "The Hindu view rebels against the cold and formal conception of God who is external to the world and altogether remote and transcendent."<sup>22</sup> If God is present, then all things of the ecosphere acquire divinity, sacredness, sanctity, and God is adored in them.

The God who is in the fire,  
the God who is in the water,  
the God who has entered into the world,  
the God who is in the plants and trees,  
adoration to that God, adoration to him.<sup>23</sup>

Thus, the beauty of the world is a form of God's appearance. Beautiful places are signs of God.<sup>24</sup> They are manifestations of the

18. Cf. Paul AUVRAY, "Creation" in *Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. by X. LEON-DUFOUR, New York: The Seabury Press, 2nd ed. 1913.

19. Robert FARICY, *Wind and Sea Obey Him*, London: SCM Press, 1982, p. 72. "As you do not know the way of the wind, or how the bones grow in the womb, so you do not know the works of God who governs everything" (Eccles 11:5).

20. See Ps 104: Light is the garment of God, sky is His tent, the clouds are His chariots, the winds His messengers, fire and flame His ministers. See also R.J. RAJA, "Eco-Spirituality in the Psalms," *Vidyajyoti* 53 (1983) pp. 637-650.

21. See Swami ABHISHIKTANANDA, *Hindu-Christian Meeting Point*, Bombay: The Institute of Indian Culture, 1969, p. 69.

22. *The Hindu View of Life*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1961, p.51.

23. *Bhagavad Gita* 18:61.

24. John CARMODY, *Ecology and Religion: Towards a New Christian Theology of Nature*, New York/Ramsey: Paulist Press, 1983, p. 78. See Psalm 8: "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is the name in all the earth . . . when I look at the heavens, the work of thy hands . . ." or Psalm 19: "The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims His hardwork." See Bede GRIFFITHS, *Return to the Centre*, London: Fount Paperbacks, second impression, 1981, p.12. Also by the same author, *Marriage of East and West*. Glasgow: William Collins and Co. Ltd., 1982, pp. 17-18.



divine nature. That is why everything is sacred: water, fire, mountains, rivers, trees and animals. There are holy trees, holy rivers, holy seas, holy mountains, "symbols" to intuit the Divine as depth reality of things.<sup>25</sup>

Everything is a symbol of God . . . . For the holy is the source of truth no less than of beauty. It relates the world to the one, transcendent reality from which the world derives its existence, its meaning and loveliness.<sup>26</sup>

## Part II: Theology and the Ecological Crisis

### 1. *The Universality of the Crisis*

The ecological crisis looms over the whole earth and affects every person, nay, every living thing. It is in the air we breathe, in the water we drink and in the land we dwell on. No continent and no country is spared. The problem is not limited to any one or other "block." It is there for the Christian, for the Hindu, for the Muslim, for the Buddhist and even for the agnostic. Ecological devastation has no political party affiliation either. It is a universal problem.<sup>27</sup> Thus the ecological crisis is capable of bringing together all nations, religions, races, languages and cultures. This perhaps is a positive aspect of what is otherwise a grim reality, the danger of "not merely a human, but a planetary end — the death of the earth" — we can even say, a murder of the earth.

### 2. *Man's responsibility in this crisis*

Religion sees the ecological crisis is a problem caused by the behaviour of the humans, and not simply an automatic effect of the cycle of energy.<sup>28</sup> As Fr Felix Wilfred observes, the human being has been behaving like the proverbial fool "cutting the very branch on which he sits."<sup>29</sup> It is meaningless to blame it all on science, as if

25. Samuel RAYAN, "An Asian Spirituality of Liberation" in *Asian Christian Spirituality: Reclaiming Traditions*, pp. 20, 23.

26. Mathew FOX, *Original Blessing*, p. 12. This is a very worthwhile book for anyone interested in a new theology of Creation. Taking in both from the East and West, the author, in a way new to theologising, promotes what is called a "complementary vision," namely the visions of East and West about Reality complementing each other, as we have attempted in the first part of this article.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

28. A.E. MUTHUNAYAGAM, "Atmospheric Pollution," in *National Seminar on Ecological Awareness*, Nagercoil, 21-22 April 1989, p.40.

29. Felix WILFRED, *loc.cit.*, p.55.

science could do anything apart from the act of the human. Accepting the human responsibility inspires hope that the same human person has in himself the power to desist from the "rape of the earth"<sup>30</sup> thus precluding a resignation to the crisis as to a fate. Theology holds the human being responsible. And if we are doing it, it is also clear that we can stop it, if we want.

### 3. The effects of eco-degradation

#### a) Fall of equilibrium in nature

Passion blurs vision. In our greed to possess and to consume, we fail to see reality in its entirety. There are three levels in which this unity is denied. Firstly, the one-sided or a truncated view of nature as a collection of disjointed objects rather as one unity. This results in a negatively "specialized" emphasis on certain aspects of what is called a development without taking into account the harm done to other areas. This is called by Pope John Paul an "indiscriminate application of advances in science and technology." There is today a "painful realization that we cannot interfere in one area of the ecosystem without paying due attention to the consequences of such interference in other areas."<sup>31</sup> It results in "turning the world into garbage."<sup>32</sup> The toxic waste is dumped into the earth and turns the land into desert; is poured into water and turns that water (symbol of life in all cultures) into murderous liquid; is sent into the air changing the atmosphere into a deadly gas-chamber resulting in the depletion of the ozone layer and producing "green-house" effect.<sup>33</sup>

Another evil effect of this one-sided vision is idealization of industrialization and economic development. The postwar European development has begun to show signs that it was not a real "progress" but "retrogression." Economic development through industrialization was idealized and was sought after as the only goal of Governments. As Dr Lakshmikumari, the President of Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari, so succinctly says: "We were hypnotised into believing that this is civilization, culture and science."<sup>34</sup>

30. Expression used to describe the human hand in ecological degradation in John CARMODY, *op.cit.*, p. 6.

31. 1990 Peace Day Message, no.6.

32. John CARMODY, *op.cit.*, p. 72. See also Christopher DERRICK, *The Delicate Creation: Towards a Theology of Environment*, London: Tom Stacey Ltd., 1972, p.5.

33. Pope JOHN PAUL II, 1990 Peace Day Message, no.6; *The National Seminar on Eco-Awareness*, 21-22 April 89, Nagercoil. See "The City of Death" in *India Today* (31 December 1984), pp. 4-25.

34. Dr M. LAKSHMIKUMARI, "Towards Earth Citizenship" in *National Seminar on ECO Awareness*, Nagercoil, p.6.

### b) Disrupture of the nature-human being relationship

India is a predominantly agriculturalist country and "life in partnership with the earth" is most naturally the way of life here. But the five year plans here and in other places have tended to play down the "cultus" (meaning both "worship" and "tilling") of the land which has been replaced by a "cultus" of the machines. Technology becomes god, and the high priest of this newly found "religion" sacrifices the riches of the land to that god of his own making. The advances of the 1960s made the human beings turn to machines and computers as the "messiahs." Now seeing the aftereffects of the same, in the 1990s we sit back depressed, disgruntled and dissatisfied.

In our ignorance of the whole, we are trained to look at the world and react to it as though it is separate and different from us, something which we must conquer and keep under control. This alien feeling is at the root of all our resentments, stresses, strains, tensions, irritations . . .<sup>35</sup>

### c) Nature desecrated

The agricultural age divinized nature and lived a life close to her, but the technological age has "subdued" that "dwelling of God" and has driven away the divine element. In the primordial story the Bible presents God as driving away the humans from the "garden" which they had corrupted with their sin of pride and deceit. The reversal is happening today. The humans have driven away God from the "garden" and have occupied even the most beautiful places in the name of science, technology, tourism, and defence. As a result there are no sacred rivers, no sacred sky where the humans fear to tread, where they do not put their fingerprints of arrogance and destruction. They violate the virginity of the beautiful lands, rivers, forests, hills. Indeed their act is a godless "rape of the earth." Father Bode Griffiths painfully observes:

The modern age has banished God from the world and therefore it has banished beauty. Everything has become 'profane', exiled from the sphere of the 'holy' and therefore everything has lost its meaning.<sup>36</sup>

35. *Ibid.* R.J. RAJA, "Eco-Spirituality in the Psalms," p. 639, calls the human being the high priest of creation, of nature. Has he/she become now the "leiturgos" of machines?

36. *Ibid.* GRIFFITHS, *Return to the Centre*, p. 22.

Having banished God, the humans are fearless. They freely commit the threefold sins of the ecological crisis: geocide, ecocide and biocide.<sup>37</sup>

Consumerism is a result of the vacuum created by the absence of God. It is against human nature to be without God. If the human being has a God he/she will worship him and will "belong" to him. If one has no God, then oneself becomes god and this god would like to "possess." Religion is an expression of the need to "belong," the need to "possess" is consumerism.

It is a pity that modernization is almost equal to consumerism today. Consumerism is a subtle form of slavery and subjugation. There the use of a thing is not need-based, but the need is use-based. In other words, a "consumer" uses the thing not because he needs it; he rather "needs" the thing because he wants to "use" it. "Need" takes over from "use" and greed becomes the order of the day. As a result, all the energies of nature are being used up, without any thought for future generations. But who is aware of the fact that "nature can provide for the need of every man, not for the greed of every man"?<sup>38</sup>

#### d) Exploitation in human relationship

The ecological devastation is only symptomatic of a confusion and disharmony in the sphere of human relationships. The human habitat is very different from that of animals and plants. An external ecosphere is also not enough. There is need of an atmosphere of acceptance, respect and self-actualization, which are fundamental to the human person.

The presence of global injustice is a sin against this human ecosphere. It is against the very nature of created things that a few enjoy the benefit of much wealth and the vast majority have to go with what is left out.

God intended the earth and all that it contains for the use of every human being and people. Thus, as all people follow justice and unity in charity, created goods should abound for them on a reasonable basis.<sup>39</sup>

In concrete, for a vast majority of people this prevailing injustice means hunger, malnutrition, weakness, impaired ability for sustained

37. Mathew FOX, *op.cit.*, p.19.

38. Statement of the Meeting on Religion and Environment, Nilgiris 22-24 September, 1989.

39. Vatican II, *Gaudium et spes*, no.69.

work, diminished resistance to disease, retarded intellectual growth and slow death.<sup>40</sup>

The ugliest phase of this "humansphere" devastation is the denial of human dignity shown in the existence of the caste system, the oppression and subjugation of women, the dowry system and the child labour. Unemployment, corruption, abortion, prostitution and bonded labour, are situations against the just order or Dharma intended by the loving God. An eco-awareness that does not take into account these aspects of the human struggle to survive will be again guilty of an onesided emphasis resulting in yet another form of imbalance.

It is an eye-opening experience to study the intimate relationship between social injustice and eco-devastation, on the national as well as on international levels.

The affluent countries of the world, which possess the monopoly of wealth and industry are largely guilty of eco-exploitation. For example, the 20 per cent of the world population in the countries of the industrialized "north" together emit 80 per cent of the global greenhouse gases.<sup>41</sup> The U.S.A. which has only 4 per cent of the world population, is responsible for 24 per cent of these gases.<sup>42</sup> In many different ways a hazardous waste of affluent countries is carried around the world and often dumped into poor nations (under the pretext of economic and industrial aid).

Within our own country, it is the economically exploited population which has to suffer the effect of pollution of air and water. The rivers which have made India's countryside fertile either become dry because their waters are being diverted to quench the

40. See Duarte BARRETO, *Indian Situation*, Bangalore: Centre for Social Action, 1976; Raymond D'SILVA, "The Changing Society and the Church" in D.S. AMALORPAVADASS, ed., *The Indian Church in the Struggle for a New Society*, Bangalore: NBCLC, 1981; "Crippling Contradictions" in *India Today* (1-15 Jan, 1984), p.143. See also J. MURICKAM (ed.), *Poverty in India: Challenges and Responses*, Bangalore: Xavier Board of Higher Education in India, 1988.

41. Neena VYAS, "It is Time to Pay Up," in *The Hindu Magazine* (Sunday, June 14, 1992), p.1.

42. D. BHARATHAN, "Is Earth Summit a Success?", in *Dinamani* (Madurai, Thursday, June 25, 1992), p. 6. It is not accidental or unexpected that the Earth Summit at Rio saw many a row between the affluent (exploiting) countries and the poor (exploited) nations. Something positive was that the USA stood isolated when it refused to sign the vital Biodiversity Statement.

consumeristic needs of the urban upper middle-class population, or have become polluted because the sewage of the towns and cities flow into them. The rich have their own water-facilities, but what about the rural poor who count on these rivers . . . ? The economically exploited are also subject to eco-disasters.

The slums, which account for a one-third of the urban population, present a sordid picture of ecological hazards. It is in these areas inhabited by the powerless and voiceless people that all the garbage is dumped. Since the power-politics of municipalities and corporations are controlled by the upper-class, the slums and sub-urban areas are neglected. The lack of sufficient sanitary and health amenities render the area disastrous in many ways.<sup>43</sup>

Dams have been (are being) constructed; factories and nuclear plants are being instaled, missites are being tested. These cause ecological catastrophes, but they also cause indescribable sufferings to the poor who have been (or who are) living in those areas. The poor are compelled to migrate to less promising areas. The homelands of the poor tribals are colonized in the name of the so-called "development" efforts of the dominant groups.<sup>44</sup>

Male chauvanism and subjugation of women have close links with eco-devastation. "The perspective which looks upon man as the master of the Universe, destined to dominate it through rationality and science and ready to sacrifice quality to quantity and speed, motivated by the selfish goal of consumerism,"<sup>45</sup> is the result of a

43. What Lapierre says about the slum in Calcutta is applicable to all slums (2000 slums in Calcutta alone) throughout the country: "It was a place where there was not even one tree per three thousand inhabitants, not a single flower, butterfly or bird, apart from vultures and crows — it was a place where children did not even know what a bush, a forest or a pond was, where the air was so laden with carbon dioxide and sulphur that pollution killed at least one member in every family; a place where men and beasts baked in a furnace for the eight months of summer until the monsoon transformed their alley ways and shacks into lakes of mud and excrement; a place where leprosy, tuberculosis, dysentery and all the malnutrition diseases, until recently, reduced the average life expectancy to one of the lowest in the world; a place where over eight thousand cows and buffaloes tied up to dung heaps provided milk infected with germs." Dominique LAPIERRE, *The City of Joy*, London: Arrow Books, 1986, p. 46.

44. "An Indian Search for a Spirituality of Liberation," in Virginia FABELLA, *Asian Christian Spirituality: Reclaiming Traditions*, p. 72.

45. *Final Statement*, no.26 of the Research Seminar. D.S. AMALORPAVADASS (ed.), *The Indian Church in the Struggle for a New Society*. Bangalore: NBCLC, 1981, p. 50.

male dominated idea of development.<sup>46</sup> Like the earth, women are life-giving and anything that affects mother Earth does have an effect on the health and total well-being of women.<sup>47</sup>

### Part III: Spirituality of Eco-Restoration

If the ecological devastation is a moral and a social problem, the solution should also concern the moral and social spheres. Therefore, spirituality calls for attitudinal and structural changes in both these spheres, especially in areas actively involved in polluting the earth.

The first is a renunciation of greed and fulfilment in the minimum needed for life. Religion demands a simple way of life which goes content with fewer needs. Pope John Paul II states:

Modern society will find no solution to the ecological problem unless it takes a serious look at its life style . . . Simplicity, moderation and discipline, must become part of everyday life, lest all suffer the negative consequences of the careless habits of a few.<sup>48</sup>

This is possible in an atmosphere of conversion from self-centredness to an other-centred life, what Mathew Fox calls as a movement "from an egological to an ecological consciousness."<sup>49</sup>

A call to change is a call to take sides with what is right and to hate evil. A form of awareness is to be created in all the people so that a hatred of "eco-devastation and a liking for eco-restoration may be created. An education in ecological responsibility is urgent."<sup>50</sup>

Awareness is not familiarity with some dry statistics. It is a realization that comes from an inner light. Eco-awareness in its depth is possible only in the realization of one's mystical identity with the environment, an interior solidarity with nature. It is a religious mystical experience rather than an intellectual exercise. It is "a new approach to life and its challenges based on such a global, macro-biotic or ecological awareness . . ."<sup>51</sup> Knowledge of science

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46. "An Indian Search for a Theology of Liberation" (see note 44), p. 70.

47. The relationship between feminine well-being and ecology is yet to be brought to the fore.

48. 1990 *Peace Day Message*, no. 13.

49. *Original Blessing*, p. 15.

50. Pope JOHN PAUL II, 1990 *Peace day Message*, no. 13.

51. Dr M. LAKSHMIKUMARI, *op.cit.*

and of the ecosphere can help this realization, but only contemplation can lead to the cosmic and global vision of reality. It is "the silent awareness of God's presence in the depth of one's own heart as well as in the core of everything."<sup>52</sup> The God whom I experience as the centre of my own being is at the same time experienced as the unity of all beings. This is "to recognize the Divine in oneself and also in others."<sup>53</sup>

This will result in the rediscovery of the God-element in the universe the loss of which underlies the acts that precipitate ecological devastation. With Sri Ramakrishna one will be able to say:

I do see the Beings as the veritable Reality . . . I do actually see that it is the Absolute who has become all things around us . . . the spirit within being awakened. The next step is the realization of the Universal Spirit.<sup>54</sup>

All this realization and mystical awareness will be of no avail if it is not accompanied by my solidarity with the suffering, and marginalized, with the oppressed and exploited. Eco-reconstruction must be done and it can be done only by the promotion of a just social order, which will banish poverty by a just distribution and management of the goods of the world.

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52. Swami ABHISHIKTANUNDA, *The Church in India*, Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1971, p. 42.

53. Swami YATISWARANANDA, "Towards Meditation" in Christopher ISHERWORD, ed., *Vedanta for the Western World*, London: Unwin Books, 1963, p. 64.

54. *Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna*, Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1925, p.236.



# Book Reviews

## The Kingdom

**The Kingdom of God in 20th-Century Interpretation.** Edited by Wendell WILLIS. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987. Pp. xii-208. N.p. ISBN 0-913573-82-5.

This is a valuable book for anyone studying this theme in the NT. The initial essays cover major approaches to the theme by concentrating on the contributions of key authors and their position vis a vis the "temporal" nature of the Kingdom or the Eschatology involved with this theme. The book begins with the rediscovery of the basic eschatological / apocalyptic dimension of Jesus' ministry by Weiss and Schweitzer, causing the death of the ethical-liberal reading of the Gospel, and the reaction to this by Dodd and Bultmann with their realized/existential eschatology. The mediating position of the "already"/"not yet" character of the eschatology of the Kingdom is treated by a study of Kummel and Lapp.

A major shift in focus occurred in the study of the theme because of the literary approach to the phrase 'the Kingdom of God' initiated by Wilder and developed by Perrin with his distinction between a steno-symbol with a temporal dimension and a tensive symbol atemporal in character with multiple, evocative and transformative potentials. Also Perrin introduced his understanding of the myth embodied in the tensive symbol of the Kingdom of God. We see the influence of Perrin in the work of later writers and also the critique of his tensive symbol and myth presuppositions — the lack of attention to determined content (O'Toole), the unnecessary exclusion of the temporal dimension (Boring) and we could add his faulty understanding of the OT eschatology implied in his myth (Beasley Murray in his *Jesus and the Kingdom of God*).

The next group of essays study the way the OT and the intertestamental literature including Qumran enable us to conclude that Jesus' audience had a basic pre-understanding which enabled them to understand his use of the phrase whatever may have been the particular interpretation he embodied within this tensive symbol. These are careful and useful essays. I think Patrick omits the dimension of God's saving actions while he stresses the political, juridical and legislative implications of divine sovereignty.

The next group of essays study the theme in the life of the historical Jesus and the authors of the NT. The essay on Luke is thematic, informative, using compositional criticism but unexciting; the ideological conflicts in the Johannine movement are said to explain the basic absence of the phrase in this literature — a proposal I found too hypothetical; the approach to Paul is too dominated by historical critical concerns. The other essays are valuable contributions though too much attention is given to the question of the temporal nature of eschatology.

Michaels stresses the priority given to the future in Jesus' teaching on the Kingdom to God and its national-ethnic nature. He highlights the radical character of Jesus' teaching, the importance of metaphor and his historical situation. Farmer discusses the nature of the Matthew's ethic underlining the relationship between God's present saving activity (The Kingdom of God) and the response of radical obedience demanded. Boring clarifies presuppositions, appreciates and critiques Perrin, carefully studies Mark's text and attempts to describe the temporal character of the Kingdom in Mark. I am at a loss with his description of the present as a period of absence and hope.

The final essay is a valuable sum-

mary of the interpretation of the Kingdom in early Patristic literature with 116 texts from the second century. There are a few printer's errors (1 Cor 15:10 in the subtitle of p.183 must be 15:30; wind p.93 (wind); from p.183 (from); parenetic p.186 (parenetic); a p.178 (an))

Reading the book I noted the absence of sociological and rhetorical/narrative approaches to the textual material and how the context of authors affects their understanding of the theme and method of study. There is also the lack of involvement with the theme apart from the passion of the scholar.

There is one major lacuna. I read Sobrino's "Jesus, The Kingdom of God, and The Life of the Poor" in *Jesus In Latin America* after this book. If Weiss and Perrin were turning points, Sobrino for instance and liberation theology's study of this theme radically changes the understanding of the theme and the method of approach. It shifts such central questions as present/future eschatology, Christ/God, eschatology/apocalyptic, steno/tensive symbol, type of ethic ... onto the periphery of study and moves the study from scholarly non-involvement to the challenge of personal commitment to the Kingdom of God "at hand" as God in history, Jesus in history and so we in our history. However this book remains a valuable study.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

## The Church in Asia

*Asian Christian Spirituality. Reclaiming Traditions.* Edited by Virginia FABELLA, Peter K. H. LEE and David Kwang-sun SUH. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1992. Pp. vi-159. \$ 16.95 pb. ISBN 0-88344-800-9.

This book collects the contributions presented at the Asian Theological Conference III (a continental meeting of EAT-WOT) held in Korea in mid-1989. The meeting aimed at deepening the earlier findings on Asian theology in the line of a spirituality for our times. This means "reclaiming traditions" as the subtitle says, i.e., uncovering the liberationist ele-

ments in tribal and popular religiosity in contrast with the elitist and oppressive forms of religiosity not rarely found also in Asia.

The contributors come from India, Korea, Indonesia, the Philippines, Hong Kong and Sri Lanka. One regrets the absence of a Japanese contribution and, even more, of contributions from the socialist countries like China, Mongolia, Vietnam. Only with their contribution could one really speak of an "Asian" spirituality, given the importance of these countries in the continent.

The spirituality that emerges is one of conflict and hope. There is a discerning use of mythologies, an appeal to the shamanic component of our cultures, and a stress on the tribal reality and religiosity in the Indian and the Filipino contributions. Asian conflicts, whether those of the Tiananmen Square or Sri Lanka and elsewhere, show the evils of absolutizing race or culture (124). However a Christian spirituality for Asia while not giving up its biblical inspiration needs to sink its roots deep in the religious humus of the ancient cultures of the continent. It will therefore be a dialogal spirituality without renouncing a prophetic mission and a spirit of resistance specially in the context of consumerism and the plunder and economic expansionism of other cultures. The ecological concern is prominent and the place of women in an authentic spirituality acknowledged.

This spirituality hinges on two spiritual pivots: an *openness* to the whole of reality and a *response-ability* to the situation in which each one finds himself of herself: it is both receptive and active.

After the editors' introduction the book opens with a comprehensive essay by Samuel Rayan and closes with a statement in the form of a poem by the participants of ATC III. It also includes two Bible studies for a liberative spirituality, one by Carlos H. Abesamis on Mk 1:14-15, read from the perspectives of Jesus, of traditional theology and of modern theology, wherein the significance of the Kingdom is brought out; the other from the

feminist perspective by Milburga Fernando and Marianne Katoppo, on the first four chapters of Genesis. This is a valuable addition to Asian theology of liberation.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

**Church in India: Institution or Movement? A Commemorative Volume in Honour of Fr D.S. Amalorpavadass.** Edited by Paul PUTHANANGADY, SDB. Bangalore: NBCLC, 1991. Pp. 173.

There is little doubt that of the many who have contributed to the renewal of the Church in India since Vatican II Fr D.S. Amalorpavadass takes pride of place. Ever since that great seminar in Bangalore in 1969 on *The Church in India Today*, in which he played an important though less prominent role, and his appointment as Founder Director of the National, Catechetical, Liturgical (and later Biblical) Centre, there is hardly a department of Church activity in which Fr Amalor has not played an important if not decisive role. His published works, written or edited by him, have covered a wide variety of subjects. Through the NBCLC he has trained thousands of priests, religious and lay people as leaders of renewal in the Church.

It is highly appropriate then that a kind of *Festschrift* in the form of a memorial volume in his honour should be published on his first death anniversary. In this slim unimpressive looking volume is gathered a wealth of material. Fr Legrand, MEP, begins by tracing briefly the history of the biblical movement in the world and in India. Catechetics, in the theory, theology and practical aspects of which Fr Amalor played a significant part, is dealt with by Fr Lorenzo Fernando. Fr Gerwin van Leeuwen, ofm, a former collaborator of DSA and still working at NBCLC deals with liturgy. Appropriately the other rites receive their due attention as does his work for a pastorally oriented Church in which the lay people play their due role.

There is a chapter on renewal of religious and Sister Vandana goes into ecstacy in her long chapter on Indian Chris-

tian Spirituality.

Fr Felix Machado significantly entitles his chapter on dialogue: "Dialogue in the year 2,000: From Discussion to Dialogue." Much has been done in this area. But a great deal more needs to be done. Hence his title.

With Fr Amaladoss, S.J. writing on inculturation and evangelization we can be sure that he will do more than repeat old themes. In fact when DSA was alive, Fr Amaladoss took issue with him on certain aspects of inculturation. The book ends with a well thought out chapter on "Methodology and Spirituality for Pastoral Action" by Fr Jacob Thekkanath, the present director of NBCLC.

As I said earlier there is much that one can gain from even a rapid perusal of a book like this. Of course the contributions vary in value. But no one who is concerned about and wishes to study Church renewal in India can afford to neglect this little volume or indeed the man in whose honour it is published.

R.H. LESSER

**Mission in India Today. The Task of the St Thomas Christians.** Edited by Kuncheria Pathil, C.M.I., Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1988. Pp. 365.

This book is a collection of papers given at a seminar in Dharmaram College in August, 1987. The seminar was held in the wake of and is in a sense a series of reflections on the letter of Pope John Paul II to the Indian bishops on May 27th, 1987.

In the opening keynote addresses of Archbishop Mar Powathil and Archbishop Mar Gregorios one detects a tension, more so in the address of the former than in the latter.

No fairminded student of Church history can deny that the Eastern Christians in India have suffered much because of narrowminded, ignorant and even malicious attitudes of authorities in the Latin Church. Now they have been given their rightful autonomy. What must they now do? Go back to our origins; preserve our pristine purity — says Archbishop Powathil. Accept ourselves

as we are and go ahead, says Mar Gregorios. Meanwhile the Latins took with increasing suspicion and even fear at the invasion of the newly vitalized Orientals into territory which was hitherto their monopoly.

Each of the above speakers talks hesitantly and diffidently about the necessity of inculturation and methods of evangelization. Archbishop Powathil: "It is this heritage (i.e., that of the Oriental Church) that the evangelist has to proclaim to his listeners. It is into this tradition that he has to insert the people who accept his witness." I thought we were supposed to preach Christ (cf 2 Cor 4:5) and not insert anybody into anything but allow the seed of faith, nurtured by the Spirit, to grow as the Spirit arranges.

There is much talk of planting the Church. If we must use an agricultural metaphor I would prefer that of Christ — sowing seeds. Botanists assure us that if exactly the same seeds are planted in England and Africa and properly nurtured, though the resultant trees will be basically similar, in time their appearance and even their fruits will differ considerably as the trees adapt to the very different climates and circumstances. Is not that the process of genuine evangelization and consequent inculturation?

The essay on the history of the evangelizing efforts of the St Thomas Christians is fair, quoting all points of view. That there were Christians from very early ages in Socotra, Thane and Bassein is more than probable. But were they evangelized from Malabar or from Syria or Persia, or were they even refugees from these countries? (Most likely in the case of the island of Socotra.) The author poses the question but has no satisfactory answer.

His argument from statistics is strange. He says that there were 30,000 Christian families when the Portuguese came. All these could not be the descendants of the few Christians whom St Thomas evangelized. So those must have evangelized. Exactly the opposite conclusion has been drawn by expert genealogists and anthropologists. They con-

clude that considering the numbers who were there in the 4th century, at the time of Thomas of Cana, in the normal process of reproduction there should have been over a million when the Portuguese came, instead of the mere 200,000. Apologists try to explain the lacuna by saying that the Christians were Nairs and mercenary soldiers and so sudden death was an occupational hazard. Quite frankly this argument does not sound very convincing, especially as it is universally agreed that the Christians were highly esteemed and never persecuted. So the argument from statistics seems to indicate a lack of evangelizing endeavour.

The sufferings of the St Thomas Christians are graphically recounted. The author ends with an appeal for a deeper incarnation into the languages, customs, literature and art of the country. Fr Mathew Vellanikal tackles the problem of the local Church. But even he does not give us a clear picture of what is a local Church. More inspiring are Fr George Maloney's reflections on Eastern Christian Spirituality. Though, as he says, not much of this is relevant to what he calls Malabar spirituality. The silences, the contemplative attitude, the richness of liturgical prayer are part of that contribution.

Despite, or may be because of their long years of isolation, Eastern Christians in India do not seem to have developed a specific theology. Fr Paul Puthanangady tackles the thorny problem of inculturation of the oriental liturgy. Preservation, he insists must be at the service of organic development. I am not sure how many of the more conservative Easterners would agree.

Interesting and important are the brief but significant contributions by lay people on lay participation in the Church, notably in decision-making and leadership. Recalling that at the Synod of Diamper lay representation with full voting rights far outnumbered that of priests and other ecclesiastical dignitaries, they wondered when, if ever, would the laity be given their ancient and rightful place

in decision-making in the Eastern Churches. This would also involve financial accountability. It is notable that while the ecclesiastical authorities in the Eastern Churches are very keen on attaining and preserving their own authority they are not so keen on sharing that authority with the laity as their predecessors so definitely did.

Fr Felix Wilfred contributes a well-thought out article on inter-ecclesial relations. As he pertinently remarks: The cause of evangelization will not be served if each rite tries to transport lock stock and barrel, its traditions, customs and ways of life to the people of the new region.

Though much has been covered in this book a sad lacuna is the lack of the treatment of the problem of double jurisdiction and difficulties of Syrian Christians in a Latin diaspora.

This book will be an invaluable aid to anyone attempting to understand the St Thomas Christians.

R.H. LESSER

## India

Agama aur Tripitaka. Ek Anusilan. Muni Shri NAGRAJJI. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1991. Pp. lviii-720. Rs 500.

With the growth of the liberation perspective in Indian studies the traditions of the sramanas are coming under closer scrutiny. However, while the Buddhist tradition is fairly well researched by scholars from all parts of Asia and of the West, the Jain tradition is largely ignored.

This impressive volume in Hindi compares the two traditions. It is the third of a trilogy, the first of which compared the monastic teaching and the sanghas of both Lord Mahavira and Lord Buddha and the second concentrated on the language and literature of the two traditions. This third volume consists of three parts. The first (pp. 1-76) compares the philosophical, moral and religious concepts of the two traditions (*tattva*);

the second (pp. 77-138) brings together the ascetic paths followed in the two movements (*achara*), and the very large third part (pp. 139-720) shows the convergence and borrowings of the narratives and stories specially as found in the Jatakas and such like collections.

The study will be of great value to scholars of the Indian reality and will help to see the similarities but also the significant differences between the two forms of the sramanic traditions that have survived to our day. With that we may acquire of more complete understanding of the cultural history of India that cannot be reduced to the Vedic or sanskritic tradition.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

Wendell's Memoirs on the Origin, Growth and Present State of Jat Power in Hindustan (1768). Edited and annotated by Jean DELOCHE. Translated from the French by James Walker. Institute Français de Pondichery (Publications du département de sciences sociales, 1), 1991. Pp. xxviii-154. N p.

Francois Xavier Wendel was the last member of the Jesuit Mission to the Moghuls, a German who came to Lucknow in 1751, was posted in various places of North India, entered the service of the Raja of Bharatpur, was charged with the Agra mission and negotiated with the Moghul authorities for the Jesuits' rights to possess lands, and after journeying to and fro between Agra and Lucknow died in the latter city as a secular priest in 1803, after the suppression of the Society of Jesus.

Wendel was a rum character whom few today would take as a model missionary. Intelligent, condescending and at times supercilious about the local communities, he was fond of hobnobbing with the English to whom he passed the information he obtained about the local conditions. He knew Persian and was more at home with Islam than with Hinduism. He was not averse to profitable financial transactions, if we are to believe the rather unfriendly notice that the French Comte de Modave made of him in

his *Voyage en Inde* (1773-1776). But for all his lack of sensitivity, he had a keen scientific mind that enabled him leave valuable geographical information about India, not unworthy of his colleague Joseph Tieffenthaler's. He also had a keen ear to listen to, and record, bazaar rumours and a healthy scepticism about the great ones. He left a number of letters now in the Indian Office in London and a three-part Memoir, in French, on the origin, growth and present state of the Jats, the Pathans and the Sikhs. The MS had been known to exist and used by Indian historians like Jadunath Sarkar in his *Fall of the Moghul Empire* and by Ganda Singh his writings on Punjab history. The French original was published in full in 1979 by the Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient, Paris, edited by Jean Deloche. The first part of this work has now been made available in good English by James Walker to Indian historians not familiar with French who will surely hope to eventually have the whole work in their hands.

I am not competent to judge the historical reliability of the (ex)Jesuit geographer. But the account, even if written in involved language, is fascinating as a contemporary record of life in North India at the decline of the Moghul empire two centuries ago, and specially of the history of Jat power in the 17th and 18th centuries. The Institute Français de Pondichery is already known for its very valuable collection on Indology. With this new collection the world of scholarship is further indebted to the Institute.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

Bhaarat Men Kristiya Saakshi-Kaarya (Christian Witnessing in India). Dr C.W. David, Indore: Satprachar Press, 1990. Pp. 195. Rs.20.

This well-printed paperback offers in simple but attractive Hindi reflections on a vitally important topic — the duty of Indian Christians to give witness by sharing with others the gift of their faith-experience of what Christ means to them. The author's style in places is pungent. He has strong opinions and he expresses them forcefully. Though readers may not

agree with all of his judgments, generalisations and suggestions, his own testimony certainly invites a hearing.

Rev. David's main point is that Indian Churches have always done more than enough work for the Lord but precious little *witnessing* unto Him. While the author admits that works of Christian mercy, inter-religious dialogue, social service and Christian Ashrams may be ways of witnessing to Christ, he insists that these works demand *explicitly witnessing words*, vocally or in written form. To back up his thesis David itemises how Christian institutions in our country have always carried on an enormous amount of Church activities and evangelistic labours. But he judges that most of these are in the biblical sense not authentic witness.

A brief look at the book's divisions brings out David's thesis. He divides his work into three parts. Part I describes in over-view the great amount of missionary work — preaching, teaching, social work and other church-based activities. Part II gives reasons why there has been among Indian Christians — Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant — so very little actual, personal witness in a steady, regular way. It also goes into the biblical and theological meaning of Christian witness. David also exemplifies his meaning from life-stories and apt quotations of some famous Indian Christian converts — like N.V. Tilak, Brahmabandhav Upadhyay, A.J. Appasami, Sadhu Sunder Singh, P.D. Devanandan, Chakkaral Chetty, Paul Sudhakar, and Nehemiah Gore. He reflects upon not only salvation in Christ individually but also its social and cosmic dimensions. Part III sets forth D's own personal faith-experience of Christ as his Saviour. *Avatar of Truth and Bringer of true humanity*. The volume ends with three short appendices in which he restates his clear conviction that no witnessing is possible without experiencing an intimate knowledge of and personal relationship with Jesus Christ, his resurrection, his Word — often heard and interiorised — and his Holy Spirit in power.

A Catholic reader, after getting used to David's meaning of the word "witness," can associate his thesis with the very strong emphasis given by Vatican II on this same thesis — for example, in the Decrees on the Laity (paras 6,13) and Missionary Activity (paras 11,12) — and in post-synodal documents like Paul VI's *Evangelization in the Modern World* (paras 21-24, 78) and John Paul II's letter *Redemptoris Missio* (paras 42-44, 55-57).

A second edition of the book will do well to review its admittedly "very summary description" (pp. 30-35) of Catholic missionary work in India by consulting solid research as in the ecumenically sponsored *History of Christianity in India*, esp. J. Thekkedath's Volume II. Thekkedath gives (pp. 212-224) a quite different evaluation of Robert de Nobili's inculturated witnessing and the lasting quality of his work than does David (p.34) in a few, swift sentences. The latest *Catholic Directory* will also help update the text (p.35) on Church statistics.

D. has spent his life in meaningful labours for Christian higher education and the cause of Hindi theological literature. He has suffered deeply every day for years from the practice of untouchability (p.181). So, when he speaks of what the Lord has done for him and why he is so grateful to be a *Masahi*, he gives his testimony with conviction, feeling and simple eloquence. It serves to add one more very experienced voice calling for personal witness by Indian Christians of whom Christ is for them and why they are who they are. As such this is a challenging book.

St Xavier's, Delhi

E.J. DALY, S.J.

## Ezekiel

**A New Heart. A Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel.** By Bruce VAWTER and Leslie J. HOPPE, O.F.M. Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1991. Pp. xi-218. \$15.95. ISBN 0-8028-0331-8.

**Ezekiel.** By Joseph BLENKINSOPP, Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990. Pp. vi-242. \$19.95. ISBN 0-8042-3118-4

**Ezekiel.** By Ronald M. HALS, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1989. Pp. xiii-

363. \$27.95. ISBN 0-8028-0340-7

These three commentaries belong to three different series; *International Theological Commentary (ITC)*, *Interpretation — A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, and *The Forms of the Old Testament Literature (FOTL Vol.XIX)*.

The commentaries of Blenkinsopp (B) and Vawter/Hoppe (VH) are written for a similar reading public, educators, ministers and students, and both comment on the text rather than discuss many of the problems and concerns addressed by the Historical Critical method. Both explain the text unit by unit without particular attention to each verse. The orientation is expository and theological. Both represent the fruits of contemporary scholarship, presented normally in a non-technical manner. The short Introductions (B 1-13; VH 1-19) cover the normal areas and agree to a very large extent on each point. Both accept an extensive redactional process of the preaching and writing of an historical prophet whose ministry was during the Exile. Both, especially VH, have valuable information on the style, literary forms, peculiarities and uniqueness of this book. The bibliography in VH is more extensive, useful and more recent.

The VH commentary respects the integrity of the OT book and therefore does not use the NT to interpret Ezekiel. The book itself is explained. They work with the text as it comes to us avoiding all detailed discussion of the process of redaction and historical settings. Single units are interpreted in relationship to the whole book and other OT books.

Having presented an acceptable structure (Chs 1-24; 25-32; 33-39; 40-48 — B has the same structure) the authors (Vawter died after he had completed Chs 1-24) explain the major ideas in a large unit (e.g., 25:1-32:32), then take pericope by pericope (e.g., 8:1-6, 7-18; 9:1-11...) and in a clear, precise and appealing way explain the meaning with emphasis on the theological significance. The commentary uses inclusive language and shows a sensitivity to women's concerns in brief remarks. The layout of the commentary is humble, simple and good.

In contrast the layout of B's commentary is more spacious, striking and easier to read. Throughout Ezekiel is interpreted in relationship to the NT which is valuable and yet the message of Ezekiel itself can suffer. The explanation of the text is again in the form of a running commentary, clear, usually non-technical (though B has some strange use of words), competent and precise. Much more attention is given to introductory questions within the commentary, dealing with background, culture, redaction and history than in VH. At times a whole chapter or section is explained without division into pericopes (e.g., Ch 34; 35:1-36:15) so that aspects of the text are overlooked. At other times the text is cut up into small pericopes presented with large headings (e.g., 33:1-9, 10-20, 21-22, 32-29, 30-33). This piecemeal commentary breaks up the text too much especially by the use of the large headings. There are some valuable explanations of themes (e.g., glory [called effulgences for some unknown reason], resurrection, renewal, shepherds...) which remain hidden because there are no indices to terms. I think B's insistence on the links between Ezekiel and Jeremiah is exaggerated and Ezekiel becomes too dependent on him (cf. pp.156, 160...). There is a strange oversight in the proof readings — Gog becomes God p.180).

In the preface to the series the editors state that an aim of the series is "to present the integrated result of historical and theological work with the biblical text." This is achieved. However another aim is "to deal with what the texts say and to discern their meaning for faith and life" and to give "an interpretation which deals with both the meaning and the significance..." (Preface v. vi). This is not done satisfactorily. Though B is aware of the readers' distance from the text and relates it to the NT yet there is not an adequate hermeneutic which would entail a real dialogue between the Christian community in the contemporary world and Ezekiel.

The prophets are excellent examples themselves of contextual theology and

can teach us so much about doing theology as they were immersed in the historical situations, gifted with special experiences of God, inheritors of rich religious traditions and interpreted reality from the perspective of faith in many diverse ways, conditioned by their personalities, background, concrete situations and traditions.

Neither book highlights how critical Ezekiel was of the blatant social evils which also "polluted" God's sacred space (Temple and Land) nor comments adequately on the potential dangers in Ch. 16 and 23 which can so easily reinforce very prejudicial attitudes to woman.

Both will enable readers to grasp and be moved by Ezekiel, one of the most fascinating of Israel's prophets and help them understand prophetic books.

Hals's Form Critical study is much more specialized though it does not demand the knowledge of Hebrew. It ought to be read with another major exegetical and expository study as there is little exposition of the text. His aim is to describe the genres of this book. Despite the visionary/apocalyptic and superhistorical aspects (e.g., Chs 40-48) and the obvious priestly orientations, Hals judges rightly that Ezekiel belongs to the prophetic genre with marked emphasis on judgement within history. Oracles of judgement are meant to evoke repentance. He describes the intent of the book in this way: "To sustain life is precisely the way Ezekiel sees his prophetic calling throughout the book" (p.5). The most typical genre used in units is the prophetic Proof Saying (60ies — rarely found, however, in the major visions [Chs 1-3, 8-11, 40-48]). Another genre, The Prophetic Word Formula, is used regularly to introduce the major units which are unusually long in this book. Throughout Hals analyses and describes the particular genre of units.

The fact that the oracles of judgement (Chs 1-24) were fulfilled in 587 gave a special credence to Ezekiel and his words in Exile. The partial fulfilment of his promises for the period beyond the



Exile also added to the credibility of the prophet's message and assured a constant process of rereading his message.

The formal study of the book and the content of this study is determined by its exclusive attention to form analysis. The major units (Chs 1-24; 25-32; 33-48) are divided into their components (e.g., 1:1-3:15... 8:1-11:25...) and further divided into subunits (e.g., 1:1-3. 4-28a...). Each of these large and smaller divisions is treated under similar headings for analysis: (Text), Structure, Genre, Setting, Intention (sometimes one or other are fused together). There are appropriate bibliographies for each section.

The description of structure and genre is very analytical and detailed which forces the reader to concentrate on minute aspects of the text. This is a real value. In the search for the Setting there is a lot of hypothetical judgements (of which the author is aware) which help, provided we remember their nature. Many readers will find more valuable observations and material in the Intention section. There is an interplay between minute analysis and synthesis. The book illustrates the riches, value and limits of this aspect of the historical critical method. The genre used, the vibrance of expression, the depths of religious thought and insights and the uniqueness of Ezekiel's literary and religious contributions are highlighted. The three books deserve a place in the scripture section of a good library.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

**Introducing Contemporary Theologies. The What and the Who of Theology Today.** By Neil ORMEROD, Newtown: E.W. Dwyer. 1990. Pp. v-180. A \$ 16.95. ISBN 0-85574-268-2

This book is of an introductory nature. In the first section the author surveys the scene: describing theology and questioning the traditional descriptions of theology, indicating the relationship of philosophies to theology and the great shifts that have taken place from classical theology alive until the 1940s-50s and contemporary theology. The final chap-

ter of this part is a discussion of method in theology with a focus on revelation and the two poles, God and the human, the downward and the upward movement. He gives major points in a model based upon Lonergan's work. These major points are *research, interpretation, history and dialectics*, functions of the process from below with the peak of the process being *conversion* (religious, intellectual, moral and psychic). From this follows the downward process with the following functions foundations, doctrines, systematics and communication. The ideas in this chapter especially form a background for his evaluative description of contemporary theologies and their method.

In the second part he studies ten theologians (Kung, Moore, Schillebeeckx, Rahner, Lonergan, Metz, Gutierrez, Boff, Schussler Fiorenza and Radford Reuther). Choosing a representative work he gives a brief analysis with comments on those aspects of method highlighted in the author when they fit into his earlier description of theology (ch.4) and the weaknesses or shortcomings of the thinker.

I found Moore (Psychological Theology) enlightening, Metz (Political Theology) quite relevant and the praxis oriented theologies (Liberation and Feminist) with their focus on the oppressed and the way each group use the Hermeneutic of Suspicion adequate as introductions. He introduces also the importance of the hermeneutic of recovery as tradition has great and permanent fruitfulness.

From an Asian perspective the books has a major lacuna as no Asian or African theologian nor their methodological approaches are included. This is a pity because Western Theology needs to listen to these theologies.

I would recommend this book strongly as an introductory text for students of theology - there are not many similar competent and simple introductions to the great shifts and new Methodologies.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

Stepping Stones of the Steward. By Roland E. VALLET. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans. 1989. Pp. x-185. \$12.95.

In the soul-searching introduction of the book the author wrestles with the meaning of stewardship. He progresses from the mathematical notion of tithing - 10% of one's time, talent and treasure - to the more biblical one of participating in the divine mission, representing the Lord and being accountable to him. From there he advances to Jesus Christ as the chief steward and the Church as a steward. Ultimately he shows that one is steward not just of money, or time or even of talents, but of grace.

The parables, the author maintains, all have stewardship implications. He studies them from this point of view and gives study aids to facilitate interiorisation. In the process he not only gives us insights into stewardship, but also into Christian living, which, of course is stewardship in the widest sense.

Thus on Jesus' words about salt he has: "Anyone who has ever prepared oatmeal knows that salt must be added before the oatmeal is cooked, not afterwards. If it is added after cooking all that you taste is the salt. In a similar way, Christ can never be added as an after thought of an already full and committed life. Only as we give Christ first place in our total life - our vision, our plans, our personality, and our priorities - can we invest ourselves in creative giving. Then we can escape the trap of being possessed by our possessions. We only really have what we give away. What is true for us individually is also true for us corporately. The Gospel is the treasure, the gift of God, committed to the stewardship of the Church. The responsibility of the Church is to be a living sign and an advocate of this gospel. If we become mired in struggles for institutional survival or 'turf protection', we are not being stewards of the Gospel that God has called us to be."

This is a good, inspiring, helpful, important, and a readable book.

R.H. LESSER

Expanding the View: Gustavo Gutierrez and the Future of Liberation Theology. Edited by Marc H. ELLIS and Otto MADURO. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1990. Pp. xiv-226. \$14.95. ISBN 0-88344-690-1.

1989 saw the publication of a massive volume of fifty essays representing the voices from twenty-four countries entitled *The Future of Liberation Theology: Essays in Honor of Gustavo Gutierrez* (cf. *VJTR*, 55[1991] 118-91). The present work is a selection of fourteen essays from the original volume with a poignant greeting from Cardinal Paulo Evaristo Arns. The introduction to the fifteenth anniversary edition of the seminal work of Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, has also been included as providing the framework for the ensuing essays. This publication is meant to be an abridged and more easily accessible edition of the larger volume. However, for the paperback edition with less than half the material the price could have been further reduced.

The most important item is evidently the introduction to the new edition of Gutierrez's first work on liberation theology. He laments "the tendency to regard liberation theology as the radical, political wing of European progressive theology" (pp. 15-16). Although there is inevitable influence from other ways of reflection, he affirms that liberation theology has got its own identity as "a critical reflection on Christian praxis in the light of the word of God." (p.16). He also points out that "the historical womb from which liberation theology has emerged is the life of the poor and, in particular, of Christian communities that have arisen within the bosom of the present day Latin American Church." (pp. 19-20).

Gutierrez insists on a comprehensive view of liberation: 1) from oppressive socio-economic structures; 2) from every kind of servitude leading to profound inner freedom; 3) from sin which is the deepest root of all servitudes. Here he is in tune with recent Church documents like *Liberatis Conscientia* of 1986.

He also points out several areas in which his thought has matured by contact with friends and critics as well as liberation theologians in other continents. He now lays particular stress on the necessary and fruitful links between *orthopraxis* and *orthodoxy*. According to him, the two need each other, and each is adversely affected when sight is lost of the other. He also explains praxis as *commitment* and *prayer* and stresses the contemplative dimension of all Christian praxis. This is a trend that has received growing emphasis in his recent writings.

Although he stresses the need for liberation from oppressive structures, he makes no reference to Marxism from which he has been distancing himself

more and more. What is most surprising is his depreciation of the "theory of dependency" which had a very strong role in the beginning of liberation theology. However, immediately after, (p.10), he speaks of the problem of unpayable foreign debt. While the theory of dependence does not explain everything, it seems to have become more relevant with the triumph of the capitalist world in recent times.

The relationship of liberation theology to dependency theory and Marxist analysis has been very well treated in the essay of Arthur F. McGovern. All the other essays have also been well written so that this work is a good reference guide to liberation theology.

George V. LOBO, S.J.

# *Vidyajyoti*

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### **Follow Me — Discipleship in the Synoptic Gospels**

**R.J. RAJA, S.J.**

In a careful textual study the author (St Paul's Seminary, P.B. 36, Tiruchirapalli 620001) shows how discipleship in the synoptics comes from God who offers it to all, and implies a renunciation, a sharing of wealth with the poor, so as to be with Jesus and preach the Kingdom. It is a journey of growth in which Jesus is the beginning, the middle and the end. In the Appendix he shows how the common theme of discipleship acquires a colouring of karma in Mk, of jnana in Mt and of bhakti in Lk, but that the MARGA is always Christ (see VJTR 55[1991]61-72, 121-141).

#### **Introduction**

**T**he term '*disciples*' (*'mathetai'*) as used in the synoptic Gospels is rather broad, and would include, on the one hand, '*the Apostles*' or '*the Twelve*' whom Jesus had chosen (cf. Mt 10:1; 11:1; 13:10; 14:15.29.22; 20:17; Lk 6:40; 9:16, etc.) and, on the other, '*the multitude*' or '*the crowd*' that followed Jesus (cf. Lk 6:13.17; 19:37, etc.). In this study on discipleship in the Gospels we take the term in its wider sense, as the offer and the invitation made by Jesus to any and everyone, apostles (Mk 1:16-20 par.) or otherwise (Lk 9:23 par.), and the consequent response given by these to this invitation. Discipleship in this sense is an act of God, a miracle of divine grace (cf. Job 10:12-13; 42:2-3; Zech 8:5-8; Gen 18:14, etc.); and one can

only receive it in obedience and surrender (cf. Mk 1:16-20; 2:14-17; 3:23-29; Acts 9:1-22, etc.). "He is reached by him, whom alone He chooses. To him this Atman shows Himself" (Mund. Upanisad, III:2.3).

## I. Clarification of Terms

Two important terms which are part and parcel of the discipleship vocabulary need prior consideration. They are '*mathetai*' (= disciples) and '*akolouthein*' (= to follow).

1. '*Mathetai*': In her consciousness of being a chosen nation and as a consequence of the covenant, Israel could encounter the Word of God directly, and this excluded the possibility of a '*master-disciple*' relationship between God and herself, and much more between Israelites among themselves. Hence the term '*talmid*', the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek '*mathetes*' (disciple in the singular), has never found its place in the *Hebrew Scriptures* (OT) the only exception being 1 Chron 25:8, where the context is the setting apart of the singers for the temple liturgy.

The fact that there was no place for the establishment of a '*master-disciple*' relationship in Israel and because the setting up of human words alongside the Word of God was found impossible, the term '*mesaret*' (*servant*) played a more important role than '*talmid*' (*disciple*). In this sense Joshua is named the servant of Moses (Ex 24:13; Num 11:28), Elisha the servant of Elijah (1 Kings 19:19-21) and Baruch the servant of Jeremiah (Jer 32:12-15). Both prophets and priests taught in the name of God (Num 11:29; Jer 28:2; Deut 10:9; Ex 32:25-27, etc.), and not in their own as though having themselves the *authority* of masters!

Among the *rabbis*, because of a likely contact with Greek philosophy, the '*Rabbi or master-disciple*' ('*hakam-talmid*') vocabulary comes to play a preponderant role. As strict adherents of the Law and the Temple, the rabbis cultivated an intellectual thirst for the understanding of the Law and its minutiae which had an unbounded influence on the ordinary people "who do not know the Law" (Jn 7:49). This gave rise to groups of followers who too wanted to excel in the intricacies of the legal system by studying the Law ('*lamad*'), scrutinizing it ('*daras*') and becoming in some way students of the Law ('*talmid*').

In the *Gospels* the term '*mathetes*'/'*mathetai*' appears roughly 260 times. Mention is made of the disciples of the Baptist (Mt 11:2 par.), of Moses (Jn 9:27-28), of the pharisees (Mk 2:18 par.), of Paul (Acts 9:25) and especially, in most cases, of Jesus, about whom we

are concerned here (Mt 5:1; Mk 2:15; Lk 5:30, etc.). A distinction is observed in the Gospels in the use of the phrase 'his, my, your disciples' (Mt 5:1; Mk 2:15, etc.) and the simple usage of 'the disciples' (Mt 17:19; Lk 9:16, etc.), the former denoting an indefinite gathering of people and the latter a definite group (Mt 15:32-36; 19:23-25; 24:1-3; Lk 5:30; 6:1; 9:16.18, etc.).

The term '*mathetes*' in the singular appears in the teaching of Our Lord on the nature of discipleship (cf. Mt 10:24-25; Lk 14:26-27; Mt 10:42) where discipleship is equated with *Christ-likeness* in everything, especially sharing in the lot of Christ. Full discipleship is full Christ-likeness!

2. *Akolouthain* ('to follow', 'to walk after'): As part of the call-vocabulary of discipleship, the Greek term '*akolouthain*' ('to follow') which translates the Hebrew phrase '*halak ahare*' ('to go after some one') is not so uncommon in the *Hebrew Scriptures* as '*talmid*'. It signifies the idea of relationship between realities of a lower and a higher order. It may express the relationship of '*leader-follower*' denoting fealty and service of the latter to the former (Jud 9:4; 1 Sam 22:12); of '*husband-wife*' symbolizing fidelity and loyalty of the partners to each other, and thus also figuratively being used with reference to Israel and the God of the covenant (Jud 19:19-21; Deut 4:3; 6:14; Jer 2:2; 7:6, etc.); of '*teacher-pupil*' expressing deference and service of the taught to the teacher (1 Kings 19:19-21; 2 Kings 2:3-7). One thing is certain, that since Israel was in the habit of 'walking after' other gods (Jud 2:12; Deut 4:3; Hos 1:2, etc.), which in common parlance would be termed 'apostasy', she had reservations about using this term with reference to her relationship with YHWH (Deut 1:36; 13:5, etc.). The Gospel usage of '*akolouthain*' may go back to the 'teacher-pupil' ('*rabbi-talmid*') relationship displayed in the prophetic brotherhood such as that of Elijah and Elisha mentioned above.

Because the Lord was a devouring fire and a jealous God (Deut 4:24), the rabbis themselves, though theo-centric and torah-centric, could not reconcile themselves with the idea of 'following God'. The transcendence of God would never permit them to speak in terms of a 'walking after' God. At the same time they were not averse to the fact of having disciples of their own to pursue the study of the Law. Studying the Law meant, of course, 'walking after' ('being with', 'in the presence of,' etc.) the master or following him who had the expertise over the Law. "It is more important said a rabbi, to serve the Law than just understand it." Serving the Law came to mean to be at the service of the master, to surrender oneself to the master. In this pregnant sense '*halak ahare*' ('to walk

after') acquired the meaning 'to serve'. By the same token 'to listen to', 'to be with', 'to surrender', 'to serve', 'to follow', etc., became convertible with one another.

In the Indian tradition, too, the '*chela*' in the '*guru-sishya*' system is one who is at the service of the '*guru*'. He or she attains the status of a true '*chela*' through renunciation ('*vairagya*') and discernment ('*viveka*'), through ridding himself or herself of egoism ('*ahamkara*') by burning off all desires, severing off all knots and controlling all senses, all of which lead to total surrender ('*sraddha*') in faith and obedience. "I am your disciple," says the Gita, "and put all my trust in you (I who have *surrendered* completely); so teach me" (Gita 2:7).

3. Although the '*rabbi-talmid*' relationship (like the '*Guru-chela*' pattern) comes nearer to the '*Jesus-disciple*' relationship, and the rabbinic as well as the biblical concepts of '*walking after*' ('*halak ahare*') and '*following*' ('*akolouthein*') are closer to each other than may seem at first sight, yet the differences between them are considerable and hence should not be overlooked. The following chart gathers up the main differences between the two

#### Jesus-Disciples

1. Jesus himself chooses his disciples (Jn 15:16; Mk 3:13; Lk 9:59 etc).
2. Jesus binds his disciples to his own person (Mk 3:14).
3. The community of life with Jesus is an end in itself (Mt 10:24-25).
4. Jesus sends his disciples to proclaim the Kingdom (Lk 9:60; Mk 3:14; Mt 4:19).
5. Jesus calls any and everyone to become his disciples (Mk 1:16-20; 2:14; cf. the list of the apostles, Lk 6:15).
6. Jesus needed no ordination to be a rabbi; he is just named so (Mk 9:5; 14:45).
7. Jesus has not studied under any rabbi (Jn 7:15).
8. Jesus exhorts his disciples to humility (Mt 23:5-12).
9. The disciples in their turn do not form their own disciples (Mt 5:19; Mk 6:30).

#### Rabbi-Disciples

1. The disciples choose their respective rabbis.
2. The disciples are committed to the Torah.
3. Discipleship is only a step towards becoming an ordained rabbi oneself ('*semikah*').
4. The duty of the disciples is to learn the Law and the Traditions and become experts in interpreting them.
5. The choice of the disciples is based on differences in grade and rank.
6. One acquires the title rabbi by ordination.
7. Rabbis have become so by learning under another rabbi.
8. Rabbis teach their disciples to acquire rank and excellence.
9. After their training the disciples in turn form other disciples (cf. school of rabbi so and so).

Taking into consideration all these differences as well as the anti-rabbinic statements of Jesus (cf. Mt 23:2-10; Mk 12:38-40; Lk 20:45-47, etc.), we may safely conclude that the relationship between the two can never be one of dependence but of an apparent similarity, a relationship which is very tenuous and analogical and hence needs to be appreciated critically. What is specific in the relationship of Jesus to his disciples is the self-understanding Jesus had which he exhibits in his relationship to them. Discipleship as inspired by Jesus and demanded by him was apparently a new thing, something which did not fit in, or was not on all fours with, the usual rabbinic phenomena prevalent then.

In the *Gospels* the discipleship vocabulary of '*akolouthēin*' and its compound forms are found roughly 90 times. With only a few exceptions (Mk 14:13 par., Mt 9:19) all the rest occur in the context of 'going behind', 'walking after' or 'following' Jesus!

In a *general sense* the phrase is used to portray the crowds 'going behind' Jesus, denoting an *external and literal* walking in the company of Jesus (Mk 3:7 par., 5:24, etc.). In an *extended sense* it describes 'the Twelve' or isolated disciples following Jesus, again only *externally* (Mk 6:1; Mt 8:23, etc.). In a *pregnant sense* it acquires the meaning of following Jesus, but in a *religious context of discipleship* (Mk 1:17-18 par., 2:14 par., etc.). It is a total self-commitment and surrender which breaks all other ties. It is what the Indian tradition would call '*śraddha*' which literally means 'placing the heart' on God.

What concerns us here is this *pregnant sense* of the term. In this sense it occurs 35 times in the Gospels, of which 24 are found in the synoptic Gospels and 11 in John (and never in Acts or in Paul). Now if we examine the call of the apostles ('the twelve') and the general calls extended to all and sundry a similar pattern emerges.

#### *Apostles' call:*

Situation	Call	Response
Mk 1:16 Sea of Galilee	Mk 1:17 'Follow me'	Mk 1:18-19 'they left their nets ... and followed him'.
Mk 2:14 Tax office	Mk 2:14 'Follow me'	Mk 2:14 'he followed him'

#### *General calls:*

Lk 9:57 The road	Lk 9:59 'Follow me'	Lk 9:60 'Leave the dead ... .proclaim the Kingdom!
Lk 18:18 Ruler questions	Lk 18:22 'Follow me'	Lk 18:23, 28. 'But he became sad' ... 'We have left ... and followed you'.



The similarity that is found in the call and in the response is far from accidental. As portrayed in the Gospels both the calls come from the historical Jesus. The question arises as to whether the discipleship-words ('follow me') as addressed to both the Apostles as well as to the crowd, were meant strictly for the first disciples in relation to the historical Jesus or, rather, for the communities of the respective evangelists and hence for all the Christians of all times in relation to the Christ of faith, the risen and exalted Lord. Although the circumstances connected with the discipleship vocabulary may go back to the various concrete situations in the life of the earthly Jesus, yet neither the pre-synoptic traditions nor the synoptic Gospels themselves were immediately interested in the primitive, general and external meaning of the term ('*akolouthēin*'), but rather through this term they wanted to express the relationship of the Christians to the exalted Christ, the present Lord of the Church in whom they confessed the historical Jesus.

The fact that *Rev 14:4* states explicitly that the call to discipleship exists even after Easter, and in *Jn 1:35-51; 8:12; 12:46* the 'following' of Jesus and 'faith' in him are used interchangeably, means that we are justified in affirming that in the transmission of the words of Jesus on discipleship, the post-easter Church held fast to the fact that such a call to discipleship exists even after Easter. The shift of emphasis in Luke from the '*eschaton*' to the '*semeron*' (cf. '*today*' in *Lk 2:11; 4:21; 5:26; 12:28; 13:32-33; 19:5,19; 22:34,61; 23:43*) more than amply proves that many of Jesus' sayings — and surely those on discipleship — were still valid in the time of Luke's writing, and hence also for our times and for all times. The eschatological edge being blunted, these sayings and events become an inspiration and guide to day-to-day Christian living. Hence, with regard to the discipleship texts in general we may not be wrong in affirming that on the one hand, the earthly life of Jesus would not have made any sense without the call to discipleship, and on the other, the life of the Church only makes sense as a sharing in the discipleship of Christ who is now the exalted Lord of the Church.

## II. An Enquiry into the Texts

For our examination and reflection we shall take into account both the specific texts of the call of the Apostles and the general calls offered to others and study them together and thus draw relevant conclusions for Christian discipleship in general for today and tomorrow.

## 1. The Texts

*The call of the Apostles ('the Twelve')* is found in the following texts:

- i. Mk 1:16-20 and par. Mt 4:18-22; Lk 5:1-11.
- ii. Mk 2:14-17 and par. Mt 9: 9-13; Lk 5:27-32.
- iii. Mk 3:13-19 and par. Mt 10:1-4; Lk 6:12-16.

While the first two groups are concerned with the direct call of particular disciples who will go on to constitute 'the Twelve', the third group deals with the choosing and the naming of 'the Twelve' in which too the call vocabulary is present.

The group of texts which come under *the general* calls are those which are invitations offered by Jesus to any one in general who may care or want to follow him, the only exception being Mk 10:17-22 par., where a specific individual is addressed (a rich young man who was a ruler).

*The texts of the general calls are:*

- |   |              |              |              |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. A general call:                        | Mk 8:34-9:1; | Mt 16:24-28; | Lk 9:23-27.  |
| 2. Some individuals are called:           | —            | Mt 16:24-28; | Lk 9:57-62.  |
| 3. Some conditions laid for discipleship: | —            | Mt 10:37-38; | Lk 14:25-33. |
| 4. A rich young ruler is called:          | Mk 10:17-22; | Mt 19:16-22; | Lk 18:18-23. |

As in the calls of 'the Twelve', so too one finds here the call vocabulary. The only difference is that here the call is thrown open to all. Even the rich young ruler stands for all (cf. Mk and Mt), for you and me today.

When we examine all these texts together certain characteristics emerge which we may call the marks of discipleship or *the discipleship-charter*, and which are applicable to all times, places and persons.

The disciple in broad terms is (i) one who is *called* by God (Jesus), (ii) *to be with him* (the vertical dimension of the call) and (iii) *to be sent out* on his mission (the horizontal dimension). Mk 3:13-15 succinctly portrays these three as essential elements of discipleship. In fact, around these three basic characteristics can be

brought together all calls to discipleship in the Bible and especially those in the synoptic Gospels.

## 2. The Call

The call of a disciple implies in itself two elements: *an internal decision* on the part of God in favour of some one and an *external call* in space and time.

Jesus who said, "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you . . ." (Jn 15:16,19; 6:70; 13:18, etc.), points out the source and the origin of every call. This call is from all eternity, before the one called even consciously realizes it. The reference to *the womb* of the mother stresses this point. Isaiah would say, "The Lord called me *from the womb*; from the body of my mother he named my name" (Is 49:1). In the case of Jeremiah, the Lord proclaims, "Before I formed you *in the womb* I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you" (Jer 1:5). The psalmist confesses, "For thou didst form my inward parts, thou didst knit me together *in my mother's womb*... thou knowest me right well" (Ps 139:13-15). Of his own call Paul would say, "He had set me apart *before I was born*" (Gal 1:15). Speaking of the call of the Baptizer, the angel prophesies, "He will be filled with the Holy Spirit even *from his mother's womb*" (Lk 1:15).

It is to be noted that this '*womb-theory*' which is common to the call of the prophets as well as the apostles stresses the fact that God sets his chosen ones on the way of their vocation to his service even before their very birth. (Notice the use of the term '*yasar*' — to create used in Gen 2:7-8 and Jer 1:5). This idea of God's primacy in the call to discipleship is further highlighted by the use of terms like 'to choose', 'to pick out' (Jn 15:16), 'to be pleased', 'to think well of' (Gal 1:15), 'to desire', 'to want' (Mk 3:13), etc.

This '*womb-choice*' by God which is internal, is spelt out in concrete by *an external call* addressed to the disciple. This may be expressed by a direct imperative, 'follow me' (Mk 2:14; Mt 8:22; Lk 5:27-28, etc.), or in the fact of an actual following itself, the direct address of the call being presumed (Mk 1:18; Lk 5:11; Mt 4:22, etc.). Although this call to discipleship implies concrete cases of persons who lived in the time of the historical Jesus, yet, as mentioned earlier, it embraces all times and all persons. This is especially clear from the Gospel of Luke where the discipleship term is often used with reference to Christian discipleship in the time of the writer himself and after (cf. Lk 5:27-28; 9:23,49,57,59,61; 18:22-28). The

name also may be affirmed of the other Gospels.

A disciple therefore is one who is called. No one can arrogate to himself this privilege. It is a gift first and last. Hence Paul would name himself as 'one called by the will of God', and the Christians as 'those called to be saints' (1 Cor 1:1-2; cf. also 2 Tim 1:9; Eph 4:1-2; Rom 8:30, etc.).

This call comes to every one: the fishermen (Mk 1:16-20), a tax collector (Mk 2:14-17), a rich young man who is also a ruler (Lk 18:18), a scribe who is a disciple of the Law (Mt 8:19), an anonymous disciple (Lk 9:61), any one in general (Lk 14:26). But the Gospels testify to the fact that some accept it (Mk 1:16-20, etc.), while others reject it (Lk 14:15-20; 18:23, etc.). The former become disciples, and Jesus promises to them the Kingdom of God (Lk 18:22), provided they follow the terms and conditions that accompany this call. Of the latter, especially the rich young man, we may only quote the words of Dante, "I looked and behold the shade of him, who made through cowardice *the great refusal*"!

### 3. The Conditions

The two basic conditions of discipleship as spelt out in Mk 3:14 are (a) *to be with him* and (b) *to be sent out*. Following Jesus Christ means to be attached to him and surrender oneself completely to him and all his values, and at the same time taking up his task of proclaiming the Kingdom as well as making disciples (Mt 28:18-20) and bearing witness to him (Lk 24:46-49). Before the disciple begins to preach and bear witness, he has to identify himself with Jesus; before he *acts* as a disciple he must *be* a disciple.

#### (a) "To be with him" (The vertical aspect of discipleship)

John uses the analogy of the grapevine to convey this idea of intimacy and dependence of the disciple on Christ (Jn 15:4-5.11). The Johannine term '*abide in*' is fairly equivalent to the Markan '*to be with*' and the Pauline '*in Christ*', '*in me*', etc. (Rom 8:10; Gal 1:16; 2:20; Eph 3:17; 2 Cor 5:17, etc.). The Gospel of Thomas says, "He who is near me, is near the fire" to be consumed by it (G. Th. 86). The identification is so complete that the great divide between God and the disciple is obliterated to the point that now only the Lord remains!

It is interesting to note that Mk uses the expressions '*to be with him*', '*to be with them*', etc., some 20 times to express this closeness of the disciples to Jesus and that of Jesus to them. Of these, 13 uses

are unique to him (1:36; 3:14; 4:36; 5:24,37,40; 6:50; 8:10; 9:8; 11:11; 14:18-20,33; 15:28). Surely the evangelist was not thinking only of the concrete following of the historical Jesus by the disciples of his time, but also of the following of the risen Lord by the would-be-disciples of all times. If we keep in mind the fact that Mk is giving a catechesis to the new converts, then the phrase 'to be with him' surely transcends space and time to include all followers of Christ. Lk who presents the ideal disciple (Mary) as one '*who believed*' (Lk 1:45), like John (see above) presents *faith* as the mark of '*being with*' Jesus (Lk 7:50; 8:48; 17:19; Acts 10:43; 14:9; 16:31, etc.). Here too we may infer that according to the Lukan '*today*', these usages could have the full thrust of the post-resurrection faith in Jesus, namely, the identification of oneself with the Lord's way of life and destiny in the daily existence of one's life (cf. Lk 9:23). For Mt '*baptizin into the name*' gives identity to the disciple (Mt 28:19). This would involve repentance, conversion, faith in and adherence to Jesus and fellowship with him. What Paul would say of himself, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal 2:20), applies fully to all disciples of Christ. The result is a reshaping of human life by the transcendent influence of Christ's indwelling, a symbiosis of the disciple with Christ, the glorified Lord. In the words of the Gita, "Fix your mind on me, cultivate devotion to me, worship me, salute me. If you dedicate yourself to me in this manner, you shall attain me" (Gita 9:34).

This transformation takes place at two levels: (i) Getting rid of all that may be a hindrance to the following of Jesus, and (ii) clinging to all that will facilitate the symbiotic union with him. In the words of a Vaishnavite Alvar of the South, "No kinship with the world have I, Which takes for true the life that is not true; For Thee alone my passion burns."

*(b) To be ready to face risks*

Discipleship works on the basic principle enunciated by our Lord, "No man can serve two masters . . . you cannot serve God and mammon" (Mt 6:24; cf. also 1 Tim 6:10). If 'mammon' would directly denote money, it could be extended to mean also all that stands in the way of following God, namely self, possessions, persons, etc.

i. *Denial of Self*: Self-centeredness, self-aggrandisement, self-glory, etc., are real 'mammons' that claim our total attention. The disciples of Jesus must give their all to God. By the command "*let him deny himself*" (Lk 9:23 par. Mt 16:24; Mk 8:34), Jesus expect.

the disciples to abandon and sacrifice their own natural allegiance to themselves, their claims, interests, desires and ambitions and thus become "apostates of their own ego-centric selves." This radical surrender of their egos signifies a freedom which is possible only when they commit themselves unreservedly to Christ. This is what Paul would designate as "crucifying the flesh with its passions and desires" (Gal 5:24) and John as "being born anew" (Jn 3:7). In other words, Christian discipleship consists not merely in the radical renunciation of oneself and one's sins but also in not establishing one's life by oneself but resolutely accepting death and allowing oneself to be established and ruled by Christ.

This total commitment to Christ is expressed in terms of "*carrying one's own cross*" after the example of Jesus (Mk 8:34 par.; Mt 8:38 par.). It is not the material carrying of the cross beam of Jesus as was done by Simon of Cyrene (Lk 23:26) that is intended here, but a spiritual and symbolic one, namely, the disciple has to taste the consequences of true discipleship in his life through suffering, martyrdom and death ("his own cross" — Lk 14:27). That this taking up of the cross implies all of one's life and demands a day-to-day moral heroism, has been underscored by Lk through the addition of the word '*daily*' to the fact of "taking up the cross" (9:23). Jesus' cross thus is not only drawn into the many crosses in which the life of the disciple must be proved daily, but it actually adds meaning to all of them. It is not an overenthusiastic ideology, but a hard and down-to-earth day-to-day death (Rom 8:36; 1 Cor 15:31; 2 Cor 4:10) that is intended here.

*ii. Renunciation of material possessions:* This day-to-day death or renunciation of self demands a further divesting of the disciples from all the trappings that go to make that self complacent, secure and supine, namely, *material possessions* such as money, wealth, properties, etc.

In the case of all the apostolic calls, leaving behind one's possessions, though they may not have been much, is considered an essential step in the following of Jesus.

The first disciples (Simon, Andrew, James and John) who were all fisherfolk left their only means of sustenance, their nets and their boats, in order to follow Jesus (Mk 1:16-20 par.). Luke would radicalize this event by stating that "they *left everything* and followed him" (Lk 5:11). The same is the case with regard to the call of the Levi. While Mk and Mt leave us to presume what the Levi had done, Lk alone accentuates the fact that "he *left everything* and rose

and followed him" (Lk 5:28).

This saying of final good-bye to all one's possessions is sharpened also in *the demands* made by Jesus himself in Lk 14:33 and 18:22, both discipleship texts (cf. 'renounce *all*' 14:33; "sell *all* that you have" 18:22). In fact Jesus as the Apostle (the Disciple) of the Father, had set the example himself by "having no place where to lay his head" (Lk 9:58), and by not clinging on to his divinity (Phil 2:6-7). Following the teaching and the example of Jesus the early Church too did the same (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37). For according to Lk the disciple must "beware of *all* ('*panta*') covetousness" (Lk 12:15), since covetousness or "love of money is the root of all evils" (1 Tim 6:6-10). The danger is not in the possession of riches but in being possessed by them.

Hence, in spite of his rigorism, one finds in Lk a twofold attitude to riches, a moderate one advocating a prudent use of them (cf. 3:11; 10:35-37; 12:33; 14:13, etc.), and a radical one propounding total renouncement (cf. 5:11; 14:33; 18:22, etc.). We may possess them, but not be possessed by them.

That this renouncement by itself is not an absolute value is further underscored by Lk. The disciple deprives himself of money and material goods in order to provide those who do not have them or are deprived of them. The '*giving up*' of wealth is for the sake of '*giving to*'.

In concrete the disciple is told to sell his possessions 'and give alms' (12:33), and 'to distribute to the poor' (18:22). The early Christian community in fact, "sold their possessions and goods and *distributed* them to all" (Acts 2:45). After selling their lands or houses the Christians "brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and *distribution* was made to each as any one had need" (Acts 4:34-35). The term 'to distribute' so frequently used in Lk means not an indiscriminate doling out of money and goods, but a sharing of goods with discretion, that is, giving to each one according to the need. The words of the Didache, "Let your alms sweat in your hands" meaning, "Do not give alms hastily," refer to this prudence (cf. Acts 2:45; 4:35; Lk 18:22, etc.).

It deserves to be noted that of all the synoptic Gospels Lk insists of sharing of goods and almsgiving as essential components in the making of a disciple. To 'the Twelve' as well as the vast multitude of disciples Jesus gives the command, "*Give to every one* who begs from you" (6:17.30-31); to the disciples he says, "Sell your posses-

sions and *give alms*" (12:33); to the rich young man who wants to follow him he proposes, "Sell all . . . and *distribute* ('*diados*') to the poor" (18:22). The Baptist too admonishes the multitude to *share their goods* with those who have none (3:11). To spur the disciples on to follow this advice of sharing goods Lk further brings in the example of the Messiah himself "who *divides* ('*diadosin*') his spoil" (11:22) which may refer to the riches of the mighty being distributed by the Messiah to the needy (cf. Is 53:12). Thus depriving oneself of one's goods and possessions acquires its full significance only in the context of the disciples sharing them with the dispossessed, an idea that needs to be emphasized today.

iii. *'Hatred' of kith and kin*: Together with self and possessions the disciple is also expected to *leave behind* ('to hate') the *persons* whom he most cherishes. No one, not even the nearest and dearest, shall have precedence in the scale of loyalty of the disciple to the master. Jesus demands from his disciples an absolute break from all natural bonds. To the one who wanted to go and bury his father, he proposes, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead" (Lk 9:60). To another who desired to bid goodbye to his family, the answer of Jesus is, "No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the Kingdom of God" (9:62). In the call of the Apostles both Mk and Mt inform us specifically that the sons of Zebedee "left their father and followed him" (Mk 1:20; Mt 4:22. Lk 5:11 says "they left everything," surely including the family). The words of the Gita, "Seek my shelter alone" (Gita 18:66), chime a similar note!

In the context of the calls to discipleship the synoptists elaborate the list of persons '*to be hated*', in comparison to God. These lists occur in the conditions Jesus lays down for discipleship (cf. Lk 14:26; par. Mt 10:37) and in the response Jesus gives to Peter, when the latter confesses that in the following of Jesus the apostles have left their homes (cf. Lk 18:29-30 par. Mt 19:29; Mk 10:29-30). All the Gospels insist on the right ordering in the scale of values with regard to natural affections within the context of discipleship. In its startling severity it means that the love for Christ must supersede all other loves. This most drastic and paradoxical assertion is further radicalized in the Gospel of Lk by the addition of the person to the list of persons '*to be hated*'. Rather than trying to find out if the term '*wife*' refers to giving up '*a wife*' (marriage itself) or giving up '*one's wife*' (in an already married state), we may safely affirm that what is of concern here for Lk is the wholehearted and all-exclusive love that Jesus would demand of his disciple. The path of love is



too narrow; there is no place for two there.

Without also entering into the question whether the term 'to hate' as used by Lk is more original and hence the *ipsissima verba Jesu* than the phrase 'to love less' as used by Mt, we may conclude that between natural affection and loyalty to Christ the disciple must be ready, if necessary, to act towards what is dearest to him as if it were an object of hatred. The Lukan expression is more radical, but the Matthaean one does not blunt the edge either. When one becomes attached to God, one becomes non-attached to every other thing and person!

This renouncement-series (self, things and persons) which at the outset is discouraging and even frightening, is not the be-all and the end-all of discipleship. It is simply a prelude to and at the same time the necessary consequence of discipleship. This is also demonstrated in the *Indian tradition*. In Hinduism '*sannyasa*', the giving up of all things one has accumulated and the leaving behind of all persons one loved, go hand in hand with '*brahma-vidya*' (knowledge and obedience to God). A sannyasi is one who endeavours to realize the '*Brahman*' in himself through the hard road of renunciation. He is inwardly liberated from the six enemies of desire, anger, greed, delusion, jealousy and pride; he is also outwardly liberated and attains exterior attunement by freeing himself from things and persons. Thus the disciple reaches the stage of total surrender: '*sraddha*' in faith and obedience, through renunciation ('*vairagya*'), discrimination ('*viveka*'), and the burning off of all knots ('*ahamkara*'). Thirunavukkarasar, one of the Saivite mystics of Tamil Nadu, has summed it up so succinctly:

Thou to me art parents, Lord; Thou all kinsmen that I need;

Thou to me art loved one fair; Thou art treasure rich indeed;

Family, friends, home art Thou; Life and joy I draw from Thee;

False world's goods by Thee I leave; Gold, pearl, wealth art Thou to me.

We may not find a better text anywhere that distills the idea of discipleship as enunciated in the Gospels.

The *positive aspect* of the triple renunciation (self, things and persons) is expressed clearly from the call-texts where 'leaving behind' and 'following' usually go together (cf. Mk 1:17-18; Mt 4:19-20; Lk 5:10-11; 9:59-60, etc., where '*aphiemi*' — 'to leave' is followed by '*akolouthein*' — 'to walk after'). Thus the *abandoning* of goods and persons is ordained immediately to the *following* of Jesus, since the former in itself has no meaning except in relation to the latter. The synoptists point out consistently that the separation or rupture from

one's own is always to acquire some greater good:

cf. Mt 13:44: "He *sells* all . . . *buys* that field" (treasure)

13:46: "He *sold* all . . . *bought* it" (pearl)

19:21: "Sell . . . you will have *treasure in heaven*"

par. Lk 18:22: "Sell all . . . *treasure in heaven*"

Mk 10:21: "Sell what you have . . . *treasure in heaven.*"

Treasure, pearl, treasure in heaven are all symbolic of 'eternal life' (Mt 19:16), 'life' (19:17), 'Kingdom of God' (19:24). This is *the greater good*: the giving up of self and goods alters already here the disciple's fundamental relationship with God and fellow-humans, which is the anticipated Kingdom of God on earth (cf. Mt 6:20; Lk 12:33; Mk 10:21; Mt 10:21; Lk 18:22). While in Mt and Mk the aspect of renunciation stands out as a decisive act (cf. perfect tense in Mt 19:27; Mk 10:28), in Lk it is the act of following that is insisted upon, to which the act of renunciation (participial phrase in Lk 18:28), is subordinated. Freedom from all bonds is freedom for the Kingdom, for Jesus and his mission, for service to Jesus' poor (see earlier: 'distribute'). The outer freedom leads the disciple to an inner freedom which fills him with the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:25-26), and thus disposes him to be available for service. Hence, the selling of goods, etc., is not advocated by Christ for itself, but for the discreet liberality in helping the poor. This is something unique to Lk, and in line with the example of the Lord himself (Lk 4:18-19). Like master, like disciple!

(c) *To be sent out* (The horizontal aspect of discipleship)

Every disciple of Jesus is not merely a companion of Jesus, but also a co-worker with him. Hence we have the following structure in the call-texts as well as the mission-texts:

### ***The call-texts:***

Mk 1:17 : "Follow me . . . I will make you . . . fishers of men"

3:13-14: He called to him . . . to be sent out to preach . . .

Lk 5:10-11: They . . . followed him . . . "you will be catching men."

9:59-60: "Follow me . . . proclaim the Kingdom of God."

### ***The Mission-texts:***

Mt 28:19-20: "Go . . . make disciples . . . teach them"

Mk 16:15-16: "Go . . . preach the Gospel . . ."

The conclusion from the above structure is clear. Renounce-

ment of self, things and persons as well as being with Jesus are not ends in themselves; they are only means to the goal of proclaiming the Kingdom. Paul says of his vocation that he was called in order that he "might preach him among the Gentiles" (Gal 1:15-16).

Jesus himself underscores this when he says, "Let us go on to the next towns that I may preach there also; for *that is why I came out*" (Mk 1:38; 13:10; Lk 4:43 — '*dei*' = *must*). Not only did Jesus preach the Kingdom throughout all Galilee (Mk 1:39), but also he commanded 'the Twelve to proclaim the Kingdom (Mk 3:15; 16:15-17; Mt 28:19-20). In fact following the teaching and the example of Jesus, 'the Twelve' preach the Good News not only in the life-time of Jesus (cf. Mk 6:12-13; Lk 9:6, etc.), but also after his death and resurrection, as is testified to in the Acts.

That this mission of preaching the Kingdom is entrusted not only to the 'the Twelve' but to all the disciples is clearly pointed out by Lk. While the sending out of 'the Twelve' in Lk 9:1-6 has parallels in Mk 6:7-12 and Mt 10:5-11, *the mission of the seventy* disciples in Lk 10:1-16 has no parallel in neither of the other synoptists. Neither has the command given to an *unnamed disciple* as expressed in Lk 9:60 any similarities in Mk and Mt. Thus the distinction between the apostle and the disciple fades away in so far as preaching the Good News is concerned.

In the early Church Philip and Barnabas who were not of the college of 'the Twelve', do preach and bear witness to the Kingdom (Acts 8:5; 14:27, etc.). So integrated with Paul's call is the mission of preaching (cf. Gal 1:15-16; Acts 9:1-20, etc.) that he says, "For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel" (1 Cor 9:16; Col 1:28, etc.).

Thus the Spirit of the Lord who anointed Jesus "to preach the Good News to the poor" (Lk 4:18-19) is also commissioning every disciple with the same gift and challenge (cf. Is 11:1-5; 49:1-6; 61:1-3; Jer 1:5-10; Acts 26:12-18 etc.), since becoming a disciple always entails the duty of proclaiming the Good News, being a 'light to the nations' (Is 42:6; 49:6).

Luke among the synoptists highlights this essential aspect of the call to discipleship by underscoring that (i) *Jesus* as the unique disciple of the Father took to the preaching of the Good News as his '*duty*' (Lk 4:43-44); (ii) '*the Twelve*' as close disciples of Jesus were sent by him "to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal" (9:1-2); (iii) *the Seventy* who belonged to the larger group of disciples were commissioned to preach and to heal (10:1-20); and (iv) *the unknown disciple* is asked by Jesus to "go and proclaim the Kingdom of God"

(9:60). Thus Lk does not fail to underline that the mission of Jesus is also the mission of the disciples. "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" (Jn 20:21; 17:18).

In the commissioning of 'the Twelve', two activities namely, casting out demons (Mk 3:14-15; 6:7; Lk 9:1-2; Mt 10:1) and healing of diseases and infirmities (Lk 9:1-2; Mt 10:1) are said to accompany the preaching of the Kingdom. Like the master before them (Mk 1:32-34, 39, etc.), the disciples too integrated the mission of mercy with the mission of preaching, as is testified to both in the Gospels (Lk 9:49-50; 10:17) and in the Acts (2:43; 3:1-8; 5:14-16; 14:8-10, etc.). Besides, we should note that not only did the works of healing and exorcism accompany the preaching of the Lord, but they are themselves called '*a new teaching*' (Mk 1:27), since deeds are more powerful than words and actions more than slogans!

Jesus' works against the forces of evil, against the maladies of body and soul are also confirmations of his preaching of the Good News as well as the presence of the Kingdom (Lk 17:18-22; Mk 16:15-20). In Jewish practice and approach even the commandments are set aside if there is a chance of a life being saved. In this context one can easily understand the question of our Lord, "Is it lawful on the sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill? (Mk 3:1-6).

From all these the consequences for discipleship are obvious. In a world afflicted to the extreme with hatred, lovelessness and injustice the disciple must be the first to take the cudgels and act assiduously. Oppression and injustice wield their demonic power through the avarice of the individuals as well as the insidiousness of the structures. The disciple's unenviable task must be to heal the many that are sick with various diseases of avarice, manipulation, hatred, discrimination, etc., and thus cast out the demons of injustice and bring about peace and harmony. This task of the disciple is challenging as well as demanding. But he who has called him will also give him the necessary strength 'to disciple' himself so that he may be able to do and die in the Lord and for the Lord. Discipleship indeed is a costly commitment!

### Conclusion

To sum up, discipleship of Jesus as recorded in the Synoptics is a gift and a grace. It is *God who calls* a disciple and guides him or her along the way of his son Jesus. The offer of discipleship is extended to *all*, not curtailing in any way the freedom of people to refuse the call.

The fundamental exigency of discipleship is *renunciation*: it means denying oneself, giving up *all one's possessions*, and freeing oneself off from *all persons* whom one would love and cherish.

This absolute character of renunciation can be rightly understood only in terms of the person and persons for whose sake the decision is made. The '*giving up*' of things and persons is for the sake of '*giving to*'. The disciple loses himself or herself for the sake of Jesus (Lk 9:24); she or he divests herself/himself of all possessions in order to alleviate the miseries of the poor (18:22).

The final goal of all discipleship is double-pronged, namely, to take on the ideals and values of Jesus Christ, to put on Christ, to be with him (*verticality* of discipleship) and to preach and bear witness to the Kingdom by serving the poor (*horizontality* of discipleship). Following Jesus means running the race with eyes fixed on "Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith" (Heb 12:2), in whom there was "not Yes and No, but it is always Yes" (2 Cor 1:19), and be messengers of "the new heaven and the new earth" (Rev 21:1-8) which God has promised.

Thus discipleship acquires its full meaning only in reference to the person of Jesus. It is he who becomes *the beginning* (the call), *the middle* (the conditions) and *the end* (the reward) of all discipleship. It is he *with whom* and *for whom* the disciple bears all privations and sufferings. Only the person of Jesus makes the costly commitment to discipleship a yoke sweet to bear (Mt 11:29). "What is impossible with men is possible with God" (Lk 18:27 par.).

Discipleship, finally, is not something *static* (a position or status to be coveted after) but *dynamic* (which implies a growth in travail). The manner in which at least Lk has arranged his general discipleship texts in the Journey Narrative (cf. 9:23-27; 9:57-62; 14:25-35; 18:24-30) not only gives them a permanent and a lasting value, but also makes one think of discipleship itself as *a journey* (9:51.53; 10:1; 13:22, etc.), *a course* (Acts 13:25; 20:24 — '*dromos*') and *a way* (Lk 1:79; 20:21 — '*hodos*'). It is the course that Jesus has once entered (Acts 13:24—'*eisodos*') and now finished (Lk 9:31 — '*exodos*'). It is a course which the disciple must now run (Heb 12:1-2). It is an invitation and a challenge offered to all opening out unbounded opportunities to live and grow in the service of the Kingdom. But everyone is free to accept or reject this costly commitment!

## Appendix

### The triple 'Marga' of Discipleship

At the end of this presentation I would like to make an attempt, in the line of my articles in the *Vidyajyoti Journal* (Feb-March 1991, Vol. 55, nos. 2 and 3, pp. 61-72, 121-141), to see if my hypothesis proposed there, namely, that *Mk* highlights the path of *karma*, *Mt* that of *jnana* and *Lk* that of *bhakti*, would stand the test with regard to the concept of discipleship. I like to repeat again that the three 'margas' are not exclusive to the respective evangelists, but each emphasizes one without neglecting the others. In fact, the highest flights of *bhakti* coincide with *jnana*, and both together necessarily issue forth in the right *karma*.

1. *Mark* makes it clear from the beginning that the call of the apostles was *contemplatively action-oriented* (to be with — to be sent out: *Mk* 3:13-14). Besides, the activity of the apostles themselves is explicitly said to be double-pronged: *preaching* the good news and *casting out* the demons. In the parallel texts *Mt* does not mention preaching (*Mt* 10:1-4), while *Lk* (6:12-16) mentions neither. When Jesus sent out 'the Twelve', while *Lk* (9:1-6) says that the apostles preached and healed (and *Mt* 10:1-15 mentions that only in the commission), it is *Mk* alone who notes that they *preached* repentance, *cast out* demons and *anointed* with oil many that were sick and *healed* them (cf. *Mk* 6:12-13 par.).

Further, *Mk* closes his Gospel with the command of our Lord and the consequent action by the apostles stating that they "went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and *confirmed* the message by the signs that attended it" (16:15-20). *Lk* has none of these while *Mt* has only the command of our Lord (28:18-20). Thus *Mk* seems to underscore the fact that disinterested action ('*niskamakarma*'), preaching, healing and casting out the demons in the context of confrontation with sin, sickness, injustice and all the evil forces, and at the same time securing of the well-being of everyone is part and parcel of discipleship.

Lastly, what *Mk* outlines for the disciple is the *path of 'karma'*, a mysticism of action and service, which is also clear from the way his Gospel is structured through a series of conflicts — religious, political, spiritual, etc. — all of which demand a response from Jesus as well as his disciples. Jesus, a man among men deeply involved in every human situation, leads the disciples to and demands of them *an action-oriented way of life* which is in fact the way of '*the karma marga*'.

2. Matthew "the scribe who has been 'discipled' ('*matheteutheis*') for the Kingdom" (13:52) focusses more on the 'discipling' of the disciple, through an understanding ('*jnana*') of the ancient texts as well as the teachings given by Jesus himself. The disciple is one who liberates himself from '*avidya*' to '*vidya*', from the unreal to the real and thus attains true enlightenment.

From a quasi-autobiographical statement (13:52) Mt draws the pen-portrait of a disciple. The disciple is one who presents the good news understandable and appealing by bringing out of the treasure of knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment what is new and what is old!

Besides, in the discipleship calls, teaching stands in the foreground in Mt. Jesus is addressed by the scribe as 'teacher' ('*mathetes*' — 8:18-22), and Jesus the teacher instructs the disciples through the Hebrew Scriptures as cited in Mt 16:27 (cf. Job 34:11; Ps 62 :1-2; Jer 17:10), which is absent in the parallel texts in Mk and Lk. Mt the teacher expects the disciple to grow in the knowledge of Jesus who is indeed the true '*jnana*' of God (1 Cor 1:24).

Lastly, the very structure of Mt's Gospel with narratives alternating with discourses (chs. 1-4; 8-9; 11-12; 14-17; 19-22; 26-28 are narratives; chs. 5-7; 10; 13; 18; 23-25 are discourses), and the central section consisting of seven parables (ch. 13) about the Kingdom of God are intended as systematic instruction to the disciples. More especially, the ten miracles narrated in chs. 8-10 which include the three calls to discipleship (cf. 8:18-22; 9:9-13; 10:1-4) ending in the statement "A disciple is not above the teacher . . ." are clearly intended as instructions for discipleship. Further, the instruction of Jesus, "Take up my yoke upon you, and learn ('*mathete*') from me" (11:29), which is unique to Mt, underlines the fact that discipleship according to Mt consists in learning in the school of Jesus the true '*jnana*' of God.

3. Luke orients his Gospel towards arousing in the disciple an intense love ('*bhakti*') for God and his people. He works systematically all through his teaching on discipleship that the path of love leads to a certain God-intoxication which is exclusive. The disciple must leave all including his wife (14:26), sell all (18:22), and renounce all (14:33), since persons and possessions are obstacles in the path of an unconditional devotion to the Lord and his people.

According to Lk the sons of Zebedee not only left their nets, boat and their father (Mk and Mt), but left everything ('*aphentes panta*': 5:11) and followed Jesus. So was the case with the Levi: "He left everything ('*katalipon panta*': 5:28) and followed him." Both

This saying farewell to and the radical cutting oneself off from persons and things is further accentuated in *Lk* by the addition of the word 'daily' to the fact of the carrying of the cross (9:23). The cross which indicates the ultimate in self-denial for the sake of the master has to be a daily affair. Paul, his companion and friend in the discipleship of the Lord, is one with *Lk* when he says, 'I die every day' (1 Cor 15:31).

The disciple in *Lk* is not merely a self-effacing and self-sacrificing 'bhakta', but one who in his renouncement embraces all the world, especially the poor. *Lk*'s admonition to the disciple to "sell all and distribute to the poor" (18:22) is a reminder that 'bhakti' to God necessarily entails also 'bhakti' to the least, last and the lost. The term 'bhakti' as derived from the Sanskrit root 'bhaj' meaning both 'to share' and 'to serve' also emphasizes the idea of loving service. The true devotees are thus invariably ideal social beings, as is proved even today by the tribes of Mother Teresa!

In the organization of his materials too, especially in the Travel Narrative (9:51-19:28) in which most of the discipleship texts occur (cf. 9:57-62; 14:25-33; 18:18-30), *Lk* shows progressively that discipleship consists in a costly surrender ('bhakti'). While 9:23-27 serves as an introduction, each of the other texts is preceded by a reference to Jerusalem (cf. 9:51; 13:22; 17:11), and all the three are enclosed within the same reference to Jerusalem (cf. 9:51; 18:31), the place of suffering and glory for Jesus (18:31-32) as well for the disciples (13:34; Acts 1:4). The fact that all the four discipleship texts are bracketed within the two major passion predictions, one immediately preceding (cf. 9:22), the other immediately following (18:32-33), insinuate the idea that both the master and the disciple share under God a common destiny, a vocation of suffering and glory, a sharing in 'bhakti'.

Jesus 'must be killed' (9:22) because of his devotion ('bhakti') to his Father; the disciple too 'must lose himself' (9:24) for the sake of his devotion ('bhakti'), for the sake of Jesus and his God. Both live out the poignant words of the Vaishnavite Alwar, "For Thee alone my passion burns."

Thus each of the synoptists seems to lay emphasis on and give a slant to a particular aspect in discipleship. But although the initial steps and also some of the elements in the various 'margas' may be considerably different and overstressed in each, still in so far as all of them lead to the realization of the Supreme through a total surrender of self, there is only one 'marga' for the disciple, the 'marga' of Christ who said, "I am the WAY (the 'MARGA' - 'he hodos') the Truth and the Life" (Jn 14:6).



## The Relevance of the Catholic Social Doctrine in a Non-European World

Vimal TIRIMANNA, CSsR

Sri Lankan Redemptorist Fr Tirimanna, research scholar at the *Comunità di Sant'Alfonso* (C.P. 2458, 00100 Roma) reflects on the social doctrine as developed in the last 100 years specially in Papal Encyclicals and in Vatican II, and sees it as excessively Europe-centred in the context from which it arises, and yet as one of the loudest prophetic voices in the world today, valuable specially if seen as magisterial "indications" to be interpreted and applied locally.

**T**wo eminent moral theologians, Charles Curran and Richard McCormick, define the official Catholic social teaching as follows:

Official Catholic Social Teaching refers to that body of documents containing the teaching of recent Popes and Catholic bishops of the world. Most observers point to the encyclical letter of Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum* in 1891, as the beginning of this social teaching.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, for more than one hundred years there exists a body of official Catholic teaching on social ethics and the social mission of the Church. This does not mean that the Catholic Church had no social teaching before that time; rather it means that it was only from the pontificate of Leo XIII (1878-1903) that one can speak of a body of authoritative social teaching worked out in a systematic way and often presented in the form of encyclicals or papal letters to the bishops and to the whole Church.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Charles E. CURRAN and Richard A. McCORMICK, in their Foreword to *Readings in Moral Theology. No.5, Official Catholic Social Teaching*, edited by them, New York: Paulist Press, 1986, p. ix.

2. Charles E. CURRAN, "The Changing Anthropological Bases of Catholic Social Ethics," in *Readings in Moral Theology. No.5*, p. 188.

The purpose of this article is to see how relevant this teaching is to various concrete situations all over the world, especially the non-European World. Is it to be taken literally as universal norms, valid for all situations? Or is it to be taken as magisterial indications that are to be interpreted and adapted according to different contexts?

## 1. Universal Norms?

According to Bryan Hehir, the phrase "social teaching" refers to the twentieth century effort to provide a systematic, normative theory relating the social vision of the faith to *the concrete conditions* of the twentieth century.<sup>3</sup> But, the problem arises when one considers the fact that there are so many diverse "concrete conditions" in the world today. Conditions in the First World differ immensely from those in the Third World. And even within the First World, conditions vary: North America and Western Europe have their own unique contexts. The same holds good within the vast area of the Third World: here again, conditions in Asia, Africa and Latin America vary widely. In such a plurality of contexts, can anyone, let alone the Church, propose social teachings/norms that are to be taken literally, and applied without any interpretation or adaptation?

Pope Paul VI seemed to have understood the problem when he wrote:

In view of the varied situations in the world, it is difficult to give one teaching to cover them all or to offer a solution which has universal value.<sup>4</sup>

Paul VI even added that the claim to deliver a universal message was neither his intention nor his mission. But this did not imply that the Church had nothing to say on these social issues. The task that Paul VI felt incompetent to accomplish was entrusted to Christian communities throughout the world, who had the duty of scrutinizing "the signs of the times" in their own situations. No one could do this on their behalf.<sup>5</sup>

## 2. Events in Europe Need not be Universally Valid

But, today, Catholic social teaching seems to have forgotten this, for there is a tendency not only to centralize the teaching authority

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3. Bryan HEHIR, "John Paul II: Continuity and Change in the Social Teaching of the Church," *Readings in Moral Theology*: No.5, p. 248.

4. Pope PAUL VI, *Octogesima adveniens*, no.4.

5. Peter HEBBLETHWAITE, "The Popes and Politics: Shifting Patterns in Catholic Social Doctrine," *Readings in Moral Theology*. No.5. p. 272.

of the Church, but also to propose such teachings as valid for all situations irrespective of the obviously different contexts and situations, all over the world. In his latest social encyclical, *Centesimus annus*, for example, Pope John Paul II makes it clear from the outset that he believes that it is possible to offer universal teaching in and through what he calls "the social magisterium."<sup>6</sup>

And the same encyclical goes on to propose the events in eastern Europe in 1989 "as normative for other situations of social change"<sup>7</sup> as well. This document emphasizes the non-violent means by which changes occurred in most of the east European countries. In its context, it implies that the happenings in eastern Europe are to be taken as a model for other places in the world. But the context in eastern Europe was totally different from most of the other situations where people are clamouring for change and justice. There were socio-political factors which were unique to eastern Europe. Let us enumerate a few of them:

- (i) President Gorbachev's concepts of *Glasnost* and *Perestroika* were one of the immediate causes of the break-up of the ex-Soviet empire. They spurred the initiatives for change in other eastern European countries, as well.
- (ii) The internal weaknesses of the Marxist ideology.
- (iii) The international opposition to Marxist ideology led by the politically powerful West.
- (iv) The election of an east European Pope, and his attitude towards Communism.
- (v) The way the mass media (which is, again, dominated by the Western powers) dealt with Marxism, and the international public opinion thus created against the Marxists/Communists.
- (vi) The Solidarity Movement in Poland which had the blessing and the encouragement of the country's influential Roman Catholic Church (and of the Pope, personally), and the international support it received especially from the powerful western countries.

All these factors joined together in bringing about the changes that we have witnessed in eastern Europe. But, this does not mean in any way that other situations will have *the same combination of factors* for social change.

### 3. Responses Addressed to Particular Situations

Besides, at times, Catholic social teaching also seems to be a series of mere principles derived from solutions or responses to

6. Pope JOHN PAUL II, *Centesimus annus*, no.2.

7. Bryan HIRSH, "The Pope's Politics." *The Tablet* 22 June, 1991, p. 789.

certain *particular situations* (often, if not always, European situations). In addition to the example cited in the previous paragraph from *Centesimus annus*, there are a few other recent documents which illustrate this point. Peter Hebblethwaite cites two such examples, both taken from *Laborem exercens* of John Paul II.<sup>8</sup> This encyclical was issued on September 14, 1981, at a time when the famous Solidarity trade union movement of Lech Waleśa was poised for a decisive battle with the communist government in Poland. In this encyclical on labour, the Pope defends the "right to free association," in the context of trade unions.<sup>9</sup> According to Hebblethwaite, by such a defence of the free association of trade unions, the Polish Pope was laying the basis for the Polish Solidarity's *very existence* as an autonomous and free union in a country that previously had only unions that were the "conveyor belt" of party decisions.<sup>10</sup> The Pope also says in the same paragraph:

Unions do not have the character of political parties struggling for power; they should not be subjected to the decision of political parties or have too close links with them.

Hebblethwaite comments on these words, at the same time elucidating the point that we want to highlight:

As a piece of pragmatic advice for Solidarity, this is eminently sensible. Given that the Polish government cannot renounce "the leading role of the communist party" without committing suicide, it is wise for Solidarity to "stay out of party politics" . . . . There can be no doubt that John Paul's view of the purpose and role of unions is relevant to the Polish situation.

The question is whether it is equally relevant anywhere else. Transfer this judgement to other countries, and it becomes immediately problematical. The British Labour Party, for example, is locked in with the unions constitutionally, and other Western socialist parties have the same system. This may be a bad thing, and a perfectly sensible case can be made for saying that unions should be independent of political parties and vice-versa. What is difficult to swallow is that this should be presented as a major tenet of Catholic social doctrine.<sup>11</sup>

Hebblethwaite's second example concerns women. Article 19 of *Laborem exercens* reads:

It will redound to the credit of society to make it possible for a mother — without inhibiting her freedom, without psychological or practical

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8. Peter HEBBLETHWAITE, *ibid.*, p. 280.

9. Pope JOHN PAUL II, *Laborem exercens*, no. 20.

10. HEBBLETHWAITE, *ibid.*

11. *Ibid.*, p. 281.

discrimination, and without penalizing her as compared with other women — to devote herself to taking care of her children and educating them in accordance with their needs, which vary with age. Having to abandon these tasks in order to take up paid work outside the home is wrong from the point of view of the good of the family when it contradicts or hinders these primary goals of the mission of a mother.

Once again, Hebblethwaite's comments on this passage are sharp and clear:

...perhaps the most important point about this passage is that what John Paul is objecting to is not that women should work outside the home, but that they should be *forced* to work outside the home, that they should have no option. And what he is objecting to is precisely what happens in Poland, where women are expected to work and merely add their work in the factory or wherever to their domestic work. Two recent Polish films by women directors, J. Kamienska's *Working Women* and K. Kwinta's *The White Women*, confirm this. According to David Robinson, they are both "terrible indictments of working conditions that seem to belong to the last century." If in other countries it can be a liberation for a woman to go out to work, in Poland it is more likely to be an added burden. Therefore, to say that women should not be forced to work serves their cause.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, according to Hebblethwaite, on two major points, John Paul's contribution to Catholic social teaching springs from his Polish experience and speaks eloquently to that experience. But, it is difficult to apply elsewhere.<sup>13</sup>

#### 4. Proposing Indications, Not Imperatives

Perhaps it was this apparent tendency of Catholic social teaching to propose certain principles derived from certain concrete situations in Europe as universally valid and applicable to all situations, that has prompted some of the Third World theologians to make an appeal to the Magisterium to consider also their non-European situations when preparing future Catholic social documents. "The Colloquium on Social Doctrine of the Church in the Context of Asia," which was mandated by the Fifth Plenary Assembly of the FABC, made an appeal to the Holy See in this regard:

Expressing our collective gratitude for the series of documents on the social doctrine of the Church, particularly *Centesimus annus*, we nevertheless appeal to the Holy See that in the preparation of these documents the relevant Asian realities be more considered. In this way the social doctrine of the Church could be acknowledged and accepted as

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12. *Ibid.*, p. 282.

meaningful among Asian Christians and peoples of other faiths.<sup>14</sup>

There is a growing feeling today that most, if not all the Catholic social teaching was nothing but different responses to various problems that arose in Europe during the past hundred years. The final Statement of the Asian Theologians and Catholic Social Thinkers who met in Hong Kong from March 12 to 21, 1992, for example, has this to say:

The first century of Catholic social teaching has been generally identified with the papal social encyclicals from Pope Leo XIII to Pope John Paul II, the conciliar documents, such as the Second Vatican Council's "Constitution on the Church in the Modern World" and documents from the Synod of Bishops, such as the 1971 statement "Justice in the World." The contributions of regional and national episcopal conferences, and those of particular dioceses, have generally not been recognized. From this point of view, it has not been as "catholic" or universal as its title might suggest. Beginning with Pope John XXIII's encyclical "Peace on Earth" (*Pacem in terris*), however, Catholic social teaching has been directed to all people of good will.

While this is a welcome development, it remains, nevertheless, strongly marked and limited by the European context. Pope Leo XIII's "On Capital and Labour" (*Rerum novarum*) was mainly a response to the social problems, especially those of workers, in the industrializing countries of Europe. Even Pope John Paul II's "The Hundredth Year" (*Centesimus annus*), written 100 years later, is basically a response to the events of eastern Europe after the collapse of the communist regimes there. It is significant to note that after attempting to describe the world situation, the encyclical makes a one sentence allusion to the "fall of certain oppressive and dictatorial regimes in some countries of Latin America and also of Africa and Asia." But it makes no allusion to other events that happened in 1989 such as Tiananmen Square.<sup>15</sup>

Similar sentiments are expressed by Maria Riley, writing on the African reality:

In tracing the 100 year history of official CST, it is clear that the popes were not addressing the African reality. They were focussed on the problems of the Western world.<sup>16</sup>

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14. "Walking Humbly, Acting Justly, Loving Tenderly In Asia." A Statement of the Colloquium on the social Doctrine of the Church in the Context of Asia. January 20-24, 1992 Redemptorist Centre Pattaya City, Thailand, issued by the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC). Office Of Human Development, Manila, Philippines, p.3. See *VJTR* 56(1992) pp.367-72.

15. "Launching the Second Century: Asian Seminar on the Future of Catholic Social Thought." *The Final Statement* of the Asian theologians and Catholic social thinkers who met in Hong Kong, from March 12 to 21, *Asia Focus*, April 3, 1992, p. 8.

But then, one has also to take into account the difficulties the Magisterium has to face in formulating its teaching to cover all situations. Such teaching, to be truly "catholic" has to be relevant to all situations; at the same time it has to touch concrete situations. It is a difficult, delicate and an almost "impossible" task, and deserves our understanding and appreciation. Again, Hebblethwaite describes the point at stake in the following words:

The difficulty of CSD was this: it could fly so high in the stratosphere of principles that, from above, the whole landscape was flattened out and no details could be perceived; or — more rarely — it could hew so close to the ground that its particular statement was too localized to be applicable elsewhere. The problem, to put it another way, was how to relate Christian faith to ongoing history.<sup>17</sup>

Could one then conclude that Catholic social teaching is irrelevant to non-European peoples, just because it does not spring forth from or address their situations? Not necessarily. Any human person or group, even the Magisterium, is always placed *in* a concrete historical reality. If so, no human pronouncement or teaching as such can be expected to be indifferent to or totally cut off from the concrete reality from which that pronouncement or teaching is made. The magisterium is not a non-human entity, and so, one cannot expect the magisterial teaching to be totally cut off from where it emanates: Rome or the European reality. Even if the universal teaching authority of the Church were to be in a Third World country, one could not expect the teaching that would emanate from there to be devoid of Third World markings! This is because, as we mentioned above, no human person or group of persons can make pronouncements (or teach!) in a manner alienated from the context of origin. This is a necessary consequence of our human nature. If so, we cannot expect the official Catholic social teaching not to reflect traces of the European situation.

Since the Church is "catholic," universal, one would expect the teaching authority of the Church to give indications that could be applied to all situations. But such indications have to be formulated in dialogue with the local churches, taking into consideration the various concrete realities all over the world. Once they are formulated and pronounced, such indications have to be flexible, and open to interpretation by the local churches according to their situation and needs. In other words, there needs to be a continuous open dialogue between the universal and the local churches. This is

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17. Peter HEBBLETHWAITE, "The Popes and Politics: Shifting Patterns in Catholic Social Teaching," *Journal of Theological Studies*, 1991, 10, 1, 1-12.

exactly what Paul VI implied in his encyclical, *Octogesima adveniens*, no. 4:

It is the obligation of Christian communities to scrutinize the true situation in their own region, to clarify it in the light of the Gospel's unchanging words, and to derive principles of reflection, norms of judgement and guidelines for action from the social doctrine of the Church.

According to George Lobo, in *Centissimus annus*, Pope John Paul II, too, proposes such "a hermeneutical exercise:"

As Pope Paul VI remarks, the social teaching has been worked out in a particular historical context and hence calls for discernment in its application. In fact, Pope John Paul II, in his latest Encyclical CA proposes a "re-reading" of Pope Leo XIII's RN in the light of current events in the world and intervening documents. It is an invitation to "look back" at the text itself in order to discover anew the richness of its fundamental principles; to "look around" at the "new things" in which we are involved; and to "look to the future" to face the new challenges with a sense of responsibility (n.3). Hence understanding the relevance of documents implies a hermeneutical exercise on the part of the local churches.<sup>18</sup>

In any case, if the Catholic social doctrine is to be relevant to the universal, "catholic" Church, then, it is obvious that the magisterium has to propose such teaching as "indications" that are to be interpreted and applied by the local churches. Obviously such "indications" are to be derived from various concrete situations; however, one should make sure that such "indications" do not represent just one or two contexts (or are exclusively European) but rather cover as far as possible many other contexts in various parts of the globe. This is precisely what happened during the first two decades or so after the Second Vatican Council, when the Church's social teachings began to have an impact on various concrete situations all over the world. Joseph Selling illustrates this as follows:

Further, the evolution that has taken place within the vast area that we usually refer to as "social teaching" was accompanied by a movement toward decentralization of the teaching magisterium. More and more, it became the local churches that seized the initiative of addressing specific issues. One need only remember the ground-breaking accomplishments of the meetings of the Latin American Bishops' Conference (CELAM) at Medellin (1968) and Puebla (1979), and the great impact the United States Bishops Conference's pastoral letters on peace (1983)

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18. George LOBO, S.J. "Response to Social Teaching of the Church from the Asian Perspective," *Info on Human Development* Vol 20, nos.1-4, January-April 1992, p.6.



and the economy (1986). Increasingly it became the local churches addressing local issues that began to constitute the formulation of social policy and teaching. On the European continent we were fortunate to witness this initiative becoming ecumenical in its dimensions as the local churches, represented through the Council of European Bishops Conferences (CCEE) joined with the churches of the Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant traditions, represented through the Conference of European Churches (CEC), to take part in the "conciliar process for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation" (Basel, 1989).<sup>19</sup>

## Conclusion

As we mentioned at the beginning, the purpose of this article is to see how relevant Catholic social teaching is to the non-European contexts. In the course of our reflection, we saw that often such teaching was formulated exclusively from the point of view of European contexts. This is certainly one of its weaknesses. However, it does not mean that Catholic social teaching is irrelevant for today's non-European world. Far from it! The writer believes that in spite of such weaknesses Catholic social teaching is *one of the loudest prophetic voices* in the world today. But, at the same time, if one pays more attention not to root it in an exclusively European context and proposes it as magisterial "indications" to be interpreted and applied by the local churches, we are convinced that it can be not only relevant, but also more prophetic and credible in the non-European contexts as well.

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19. Joseph A. SELLING, "The Theological Presuppositions of *Centissimus Annus*," *Louvain Studies* 17 (1992) p. 40.

## The How of Redemptoris Missio

Fr Thomas D'SA

Every year the U.P. Regional Pastoral Centre of Varanasi conducts a one month long course on proclamation to renew the missionary spirit and zeal, and a North Indian *Redemptoris Missio* Priests' Retreat is planned in a big way for March 22-27, 1993. Its director (Nav-Sadhana, P.O. Shivpur, Varanasi 221003) presents here the approach and some of the themes of this course.

**W**hat day is it?" asked Fr George Parachalil from one of the villagers here in Shivpur, Varanasi. "Sunday" came the reply. "Why are you not working today?" "Because Sunday is a holiday." "Why is Sunday a holiday?" To this question of Fr George, the villager had no precise answer. As Fr George began to explain the story from Jewish Sabbath to the Christian tradition of the resurrection of the Lord, and the whole story of Jesus, he and the villagers became united in a bond of love and friendship. The climax was a prayer for the welfare of the village, inner healing for those who desired it and the reconciliation between families in the village.

Fr George began with his own neighbour. For "mission must begin where a prospective missionary is."<sup>1</sup> Jesus too begins to converse with the Samaritan woman on a simple topic — a request for water. Fr George began from the context in which he found himself — a simple but effective way to proclaim the Good News. For the previous ten days he had gone into a retreat and reflected on the spirituality of a missionary in the light of *Redemptoris Missio* (RM), and then launched out on his mission.

How can one refuse to accept such mission when one reads that "in the Church history, the missionary drive has always been a sign of vitality, just as its lessening is a sign of a crisis of faith" (RM 2)? I

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1. MAGESA, L., "Redemptoris Missio, Centesimus Annus and the African Synod," *African Ecclesial Review*, 33 (1991), p. 318.

have witnessed this sign of vitality of the Church whenever there was a Seminar on Evangelization here in Nav-Sadhana. So far 303 persons have attended such Seminars in the past six years. Once they have learned the 'how' of it, many have returned home convinced of the need of proclamation. Since the Church is missionary by its very nature, if this ministry is relegated to a second place then we are in a sinking ship.

Much has been written on the theological and pastoral aspects of RM. Though it has a consistent theological structure, it is directed above all to practice. It is meant to "animate" missionaries.<sup>2</sup> I would like to share the experience of those who were animated and strengthened by it during our seminars. The following were the principal points we made.

### 1. A warm and active personal faith

The Pope attributes the cause of decline of the missionary spirit to the lack of active personal faith. It is the intimate union with Christ that leads one to evangelize (RM 87). This personal faith-relationship brings about a conversion of heart and fills one with the enthusiasm of the first Christians that leads on to mission (RM 90).

This idea is allegorically expressed in Jn 21, where Peter, when he sees his master on the shore, recognises him, puts on his clothes and "jumps into the water, to come and meet him." On the Seminar days devoted to 'outreach' one sees in the participants much enthusiasm coupled with hesitation. When they return from their mission, one understands the text of Lk 10:17: "The seventy returned with joy . . . ." Jesus too rejoices. Joy characterises the moment of proclamation of Good News in Lk's Gospel (2:10). If the faith is warm and active, it is automatically shared with joy.

### 2. One to one

Proclamation works better when it is done on a one to one basis. Religion is a matter of the heart and has a personal dimension. Many prefer to speak of their religion privately, and in a small company. Villagers are not accustomed to deal with large groups. Our deepest longings and searchings of the soul are generally communicated to 'individuals', at least at the initial stages. Jesus too takes leave of the apostles in order to speak to the Samaritan woman. She feels quite at home in a one to one situation.

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2. "John Paul II's 'Redemptoris Missio' A Cry for Mission," *Omnis Terra*, 21: (Feb 1991), p. 63.

### 3. Allowing ourselves to be transformed by the hidden energy of the Good News

We are more often convinced by arguments and signs than by faith in the divine power to work through us and through his Word. For this purpose a life of complete docility to the Spirit is required. The Spirit can make us courageous witnesses to Christ and enlightened heralds of the Word (RM 87). Jesus was definitely open to the inspiration of God, that is why he could boldly say to the Samaritan woman, "You have had five husbands."

### 4. Religion plays an important role in the life of an average Indian

The Church in India has been meeting various needs of the people: justice, peace, development, education, etc. However, many people are conscious of their religious needs too. The common person in our country opens heart and soul to the religious realities. He or she can be healed of fears better by religion than by reason. One finds oneself secure in a religious context. After that, one is ready to employ human ways and means to achieve one's goals.

### 5. Faith in God and not in a vague secular humanism:

Today many would like to preach and proclaim values like justice, human rights, communal harmony, etc. Such social issues cannot be separated from evangelization.<sup>3</sup>

Evangelization involves an 'integral human development'. In its widest sense, it means "any activity rooted in Christ which promotes the transformation of humanity from within and makes it new through his redeeming and sanctifying grace."<sup>4</sup> The social doctrine of the Church is a "valid instrument of evangelization" (*Centesimus annus* 57). These issues and values emanate from our deep faith in God as Father. Faith in God as Creator and Father moves us to stand by all the needy. Otherwise the basis of our service would be some sort of vague secular humanism. It would be faith in 'man' primarily, and at best secondarily in God. The human being is thus reduced "to his merely horizontal dimension" (RM 11). No doubt

3. COLOMBO, D., "'Centesimus Annus' and 'Redemptoris Missio'", *Omnia Terra* 227 (April 1992), p. 167.

4. BORST, J., *Sharing Your Faith*, Nav Sadhana, Varanasi, 1990, p. 7.

the centre of Jesus' interest is people and the focus of all Church' social teaching is people. But the moving force of all this is the experience of God as Abba, Father. Only those who are discriminated and considered unequal can understand what it means to have God as Father.<sup>5</sup> The first theologian of evangelization is God himself who announced the Good News of the incarnation to a lowly person like Mary, and made her great. The first person to be evangelized and healed was John the Baptist who leapt for joy in his mother's womb. The first ones to be chosen and sent on an evangelical mission were the apostles who handed down the mission of God the Father. Through Jesus they had experienced the universal love of God the Father and they went out to proclaim the same.

## 6. A retreat before outreach

The Pope admits that the future of mission in Asia depends a lot on the life of contemplation (RM 91). Missionary and pastoral activity flows from a life of deep contemplation and self-giving. B. Hearn rightly puts it "Mission means 'outreach' or 'giving oneself'."<sup>6</sup> Prophet Elijah went into the cave and listened to God's voice when he was in confusion. The experience of God there strengthened him to go on in his mission. Once we have retreated sufficiently with the Lord, we hear the missionary mandate more clearly: "Go" (in the imperative — Mt 28:19). The 'go' automatically follows the 'come and see' and the stay with Jesus.

## 7. More of the person, less of the doctrine

When the Samaritan woman was putting barriers of race, sex, religion and tradition, Jesus did not argue with her on these. He simply offers his very person: "If you know the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink', you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water" (Jn 4:10). Our proclamation must also be accompanied by our God-experience, i.e. our experience of peace, of reconciliation, of surrender, of prayer etc. The evangelizer ought to have heard, felt and 'touched' the Word of life (1 Jn 1:1-4). That is what the "New Evangelization" is Pope John Paul II said to the Bishops of the Latin American churches on March 8, 1983, at Haiti: "We are not to pass on a doctrine, but

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5. JOSEPH, J., "Redeemer's Mission and our Response" *Omnis Terra* 226 (March 1992), p. 142.

6. "Reverse Mission — or Mission in Reverse?" *The Furrow*, 42 (1991), p. 284.

touch of the person of Christ."

Many of us Catholics are not comfortable with 'evangelization'. The very term seems to have a Protestant ring. We are more for pastoral care and instruction.<sup>7</sup> This 'New Springtime' that the Pope has announced is therefore not easy to accept (RM 86). Spring comes at the end of winter, and brings warmth. It is like a egg being hatched for a long time which then produces the chick. If we desire a new springtime in the Church, every believer has to apply his or her creative power like a hen to the long winter of the Church by a warm and active expression of faith. What we need is not so much to go and convert others, but to realise and be convinced of and to live up to our call to be evangelizers. In the U.P. the ministry of dialogue is gaining momentum. But "dialogue . . . does not constitute the whole mission of the Church . . . it cannot simply replace proclamation" (*Dialogue and Proclamation* 82). The Bishops of U.P. and Rajasthan in a 'Message' to the clergy, religious and faithful on the 8th September 1991, while realising the need of dialogue, confirmed that proclamation is the primary mission of the Church in spite of the many barriers it meets. "Howsoever difficult it may be, whatever may be the tangible results, the Church in our region must continue to be a witness to Jesus, not only by its various Christian services, but also above all, by proclamation."

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7. DULLES, A., "John Paul II and the New Evangelization" *America*, 166 (1992), p. 52.

## Meditation

### Ps 39: A Psalm for the Burnt Out

If there is a pessimistic psalm it must be Ps 39. That is, so as far as appearances go. For despite its obviously pessimistic ending,

*Look away that I may breathe again  
before I depart to be no more* (v. 13),

right in the middle of its none too happy "reverie on the brevity and vanity of human life"<sup>1</sup> and in its very central verse, sounds the real motif:

*And now, Lord, what is there to wait for?* (v. 7a).

The motif is made up of many a mood of "faith, rebellion, despair, penitence, resignation, and trust,"<sup>2</sup> all of which combine to make the psalm the most moving of all the laments or elegies in the psalter, as has been pointed out by H. Ewald.

The psalmist began his lament recalling his earlier resolution: he had resolved not to show in any way his offended sense of justice in the presence of the wicked (v. 1). But the more he controlled himself the more he was obsessed by the inadequate working of retribution and justice; in fact he was only getting more exasperated at the prosperity of the wicked who were not accountable to the laws of justice; and so it was that his uncontrollable heartburn burst out in a cry to God.

In doing so he became painfully aware of the larger puzzle of life itself. His life was a matter of passing experience and could not therefore be of much moment before the Lord (vv. 4-5b). At the same time, the life of the prosperous wicked was no better: in fact it

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1. B. ZERR, *The Psalms, A New Translation* (New York/Ramsey/Toronto, 1979), p. 83.

2. *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. IV, "Psalms and Proverbs" (New York, 1955), p. 204.

is worse than his; for, strangely enough, despite their apparent stability based on their hoard, they too pass away and that, too, without knowing who will benefit from their ill-gotten riches (vv. 5c-6). Such a reflection on a common human experience leads the psalmist to feel his way, despite his sorrow, and find happiness in the short life that is the lot of all. In other words, knowing that life is short and believing that God is just, he is indirectly pressing his case for happiness for the short while he lives!<sup>3</sup>

Still hoping against hope he murmurs his prayer with mixed feelings: "And now, Lord, what is there to wait for?" (v. 7a). But suddenly a gleam of hope moves him to say: "In you rests all my hope" (v. 7b). This is a breakthrough — he overcomes his preoccupation with the incomprehensible but habitual reverses of justice that seem to be the lot of the just in the world. It is, as Beuken comments, his personal act of surrender to a personal God who is sensitive to his short life time and willing to have pity on him.<sup>4</sup>

Having made his surrender to God the psalmist yearns that God would justify his act. The wicked might consider him a simpleton for trusting in God's intervention. For that very reason he begs God to release him from his painful plight (vv. 8-10). Then, surprisingly, he even wants God to correct the wicked through a healing punishment (v. 11), forgetting his own natural antipathy towards him or perhaps getting a new outlook on the whole problem of justice!

But he still faces the problem of his pain and sorrow. Yearning therefore for a minimum of happiness to live through the remaining part of his life he pleads with God, as StuhlmueLLer explains,<sup>5</sup> not to look at him as someone who could last for ever on his own in the world of fleeting pleasures (v. 13), but as someone who is no more than a passing guest in his world (v. 12) and therefore as someone who has a natural, sacred and just claim on his favour of protection (Lev 25:35), particularly from the harm of injustice that has dogged his life till now. Given the sacred functioning of hospitality among the Hebrews,<sup>6</sup> he could not have based his humble plea on a firmer foundation!

3. See A.A. ANDERSON, *The Book of Psalms*, Vol. I (Grand Rapids/London, 1972), p. 310.

4. See J.F. CRAGHAN, *The Psalms :Prayers for the Ups and Downs and In-between of Life* (Wilmington: 1985), p. 128.

5. See C. STUHLMUELLER, *Psalms I* (Wilmington: 1983), pp. 212-213.

6. See J.L. MCKENZIE, *Dictionary of the Bible* (Bangalore: 1971), p. 374.



Activists in the cause of justice are bound sooner or later to experience themselves as burnt out. That is to say, after a time of much hectic labour and activity they may one day come face to face with failure, all their ideals unfulfilled, all their hopes dashed, all their enthusiasm downed. In this situation of scandal when they feel completely futile, empty and lost, the elegiac Ps 39 can be an immense solace to them.

One need not be a social activist to be burnt out. Wherever and whenever people suffer sudden or shocking reverses that do not accord with the sense of a human and just conduct they are likely to be upset and worried and finally burnt out. The experience of David in relation to his unworthy sons, Amnon and Absalom, is a case in point. David had to witness the domestic tragedy of Amnon's incest and Absalom's retaliation by fratricide and finally Absalom's rebellion against David himself and the usurpation of his throne. As he fled from Absalom's sudden attack he had to listen to the curses of one Shimei, of Saul's clan, to which his response was no more than to say, "Let him curse on if Yahweh has told him to. Perhaps Yahweh will look on my misery and repay me with good for his curse today" (2 Sam 16:11b-12). Does this not echo the spirit of the psalm of our study? Particularly striking are vv. 7-9:

- So tell me, Lord, what can I expect?  
 My hope is in you.  
 Free me from all my sins,  
 do not make me the butt of idiots.  
 I am dumb, I speak no more,  
 since you yourself have been at work.<sup>7</sup>

Lastly the psalm can give expression to the inarticulate but existential prayer of the present fallen creation in which we live. The original creation that was all original blessing came to experience itself accursed by God owing to the sin of us, humans, or as St Paul put it, "subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope" (Rom 8:20, RSV). The extent of futility of creation has ever been on the increase, but never so conspicuously and in such enormous proportions as in our times. The acid rain or black rain from the skies till now unheard-of, the large-scale destruction of forests, the unthinking decimation of the rare species of fauna and flora that will be lost for ever, the plundering

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7. The version used here is from *The Jerusalem Bible* (London: 1966), whereas in other places it is from *The Grail Version*, unless otherwise indicated.

of the top soil of the earth that has taken millenniums to be formed, the mounting depletion of natural resources, the sorry pollution of the rivers and oceans, the lesion in the ozone layer, and what have you — such is the unimaginable panorama of decay in the troubled creation. In this utterly decadent and deathly experience "the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now" (Rom 8:22, RSV). To this natural groaning and mourning, repeatedly adverted to by the prophets (see Is 24:4-6; Jer 12:4; 14:4-6; Hos 4:2-3; etc.), sensible and spiritual humans must lend their voice as they themselves groan inwardly for global freedom and universal liberation (see Rom 8:23):

And now Lord, what is there to wait for?

*In you rests all my hope* (v. 7).<sup>8</sup>

Paul DOMINIC, S.J.

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8. This article is a slightly enlarged version of a chapter of a forthcoming book, *God of Justice: A Hermeneutic of Psalms 1-72*, to be published by St Paul Publications, Bombay. The author's address is Satyodayam, South Lallaguda, Secunderabad 500017.

## Correspondence

### Celibacy and Marriage

Sir,

I was out of station this summer doing priestly ministry and on my return to Pune yesterday, a colleague of mine drew my attention to a letter that appeared in the April issue of the *Vidyajyoti Journal* in the connection with my articles on "Priestly Celibacy" published in the January and February numbers of the Journal. Here is my response to that letter.

Strangely enough, the author Dr Hubert A. Monteiro begins by quoting me wrongly in the very second paragraph of his letter. He attributes to me the statement that the high esteem in which the virginal life was held in the early Church "was not the sign of a negative attitude to sex, marriage, bodily realities as such." Well, what I wrote was something more nuanced, namely: " . . . Nor was it, *on the whole*, the sign of a negative attitude to sex, marriage, bodily realities as such." And I went on to explain: "No, it was a witness to a very specific, unique love for Christ, and zeal for the establishment of the Kingdom in the hearts of all." Now, anybody will easily sense the significant difference the arbitrary and illegitimate elimination from my text of those three little words which I have now underlined makes to the correct understanding and interpretation of the entire sentence.

In n.2, after quoting my sentence: "Chastity borne with faith and love gradually purifies the priest's senses and heart," Dr Monteiro asks: "Does one infer then that the conjugal act is basically impure?" Here, again, what a strange reaction! Such a conclusion has no basis whatever in my article which is very positive regarding married life. My article was on celibacy, not on marriage, which is a different, but also an acknowledged path of sanctity in the Church, as I repeat so many times on other occasions in talks or sermons to people. Only that not everything can be said on every occasion and in every context. Besides, I explicitly mention in my article that "marriage is, indeed, a beautiful vocation," and that "celibacy is not an absolute must" for the priestly life and ministry in the world.

However, I fail to understand why one should feel threatened when appreciation and esteem is shown for a state or way of life different from

one's own. I may ask in this connection, what would you say if I, a Jesuit priest, were to get alarmed if, say, on the feast of St Francis of Assisi, a Franciscan or Capuchin friar were to extol the merits of the great Poverello, or of the Order he founded in the Church, or, similarly, if a diocesan priest were to feel hurt if anyone spoke highly in his presence of the role and relevance of the religious life in the world? Wouldn't you be tempted to call it a peevish, narrowminded attitude?

Also — contrary to what the letter suggests — *nowhere* did I quote Pope Pius XII "in support of the thesis that chastity leads one to a greater degree of holiness." This is NOT my thesis anyway, and the only quotation from Pius XII in my article is his reference to "holiness" as "the fruit of constant self-denial animated by love" — a very general statement that has nothing to do with either marriage or celibacy as such.

In n.3, after reproducing my sentence, "Consecrated virginity becomes a more eloquent and better symbol of the unbreakable link between Christ and his Spouse, the Church," Doctor Monteiro tells us: "Yet, St Paul chooses this symbol of Christ's union with the Church to represent the sanctity of the marriage bond." True, he does, and I have no quarrel with Paul on that score, but I am only wondering what the Doctor would say if he read the entire chapter 7 of Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, particularly vv. 32 to 35.

I, however, preferred to quote from a more recent source, the Second Vatican Council itself, which tells us that a religious, though dead to sin through baptism and thereby consecrated to God, nevertheless, by the profession of the evangelical counsels in the Church, "is more intimately consecrated to divine service. This consecration — the Council continues — gains in perfection since by virtue of firmer and steadier bonds it serves as a better symbol of the unbreakable link between Christ and his Spouse, the Church" (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 44). The whole thing is simple enough. Both marriage and virginal consecration are symbols of the union of Christ with the Church. Consecrated virginity, however, is "a better symbol," not because it necessarily, or automatically as it were, leads one to greater holiness, but simply because by opting to have no married partner in life, the consecrated virgin, woman or man, witnesses to the fact that Christ is her or his Spouse. They thus become, on that very account, a more visible or tangible symbol and expression of the union with Christ to which every Christian is called. As simple as that! The criteria of holiness is quite another matter.

There are two other points Dr Monteiro raises in his letter, for instance, the advisability of ordaining married men, or a more positive approach to sex on the part of the Church, but they do not concern my article. Those are points that are being discussed by the highest authorities in the Church. They, too, I imagine, have the Holy Spirit to guide them. My only purpose was to show how celibacy well understood and lived befits admirably the

priestly ideal as we see it incarnated in Jesus Christ, in whose priesthood we share, and whose priestly ministry the Catholic priests are called to continue on earth, "until He comes" (1 Cor 11:26).

Papal Seminary  
Pune, 4 June, 1992

Carlos Mercos DE MELO, S.J.

Dear Rev. Father,

This is July, and the April copy of VIDYAJYOTI JOURNAL has just arrived on the heels of the March issue. So perhaps I am too late. However, I should like to say a few words on "celibacy" which in our day we always spoke of as the "vow of chastity."

*In our seminary days, during the retreat, before the sub-diaconate when the vow had to be taken, every night at supper, a book on Holy Orders was read. It was on the Glories of Married Christian Life and after each glowing tribute to the sacrament of matrimony and the proclamation of each joy and consolation of such a life, the words of the Pontifical were repeated: adhuc liberi estis. ("you are still free"). For me it has not been an old yarn. I heard it read at least eight times during my eight years in the Seminary. One of its effects is that at pre-nuptial instructions especially in mixed marriages, I speak of the difference of celibacy as understood by the Catholic priest and the Buddhist monk. For the latter, celibacy is a consequence of the pejorative value given to marriage and sex. For me the value of my vow is directly proportionate to the value I give to marriage, for I consider my priesthood such a great and wonderful gift of God given to me through the Church, that in the whole wide world there is nothing so good and great as marriage to offer to God in return for that gift.*

When George Bernard Shaw said to Fr McCabe, the famous English Dominican, that by not getting married Fr McCabe had insulted all the women in the world, and the women in England in particular, for it meant that there was not one woman good enough to be his wife, Fr McCabe answered that he did not get married first out of pity for the possible Mrs McCabe (that was part of his Irish wit), and secondly that he considered a wife such a great asset and motherhood such a noble thing that he thought it worthwhile to sacrifice it for God's sake.

Fr Emil Mersch put it very strongly when he said somewhere that if chastity was not a part of charity, it was as good as the barrenness which the women of the Old Testament looked down upon with contempt. If one is to make use of a simile based on a slight misconception, it could be said that if marriage was not holy and noble, the vow of celibacy would be as good as the sacrifice of "rotten apples and decaying vegetables" of Cain.

The struggle to maintain that vow only increases the value of the sacrifice, for the value of a gift is not only its intrinsic worth but also in what it costs the donor to sacrifice it.

It is also possible that my attitude has been subconsciously affected by the words which my father put at the head of his wedding invitation (I was told under the inspiration of Fr Gill), "From Love we came, That Love we may, Till to Love we return." For me both marriage and celibacy are an exercise of that LOVE and I imagine that is why God wanted Mary to be both Maiden and Mother.

Yours truly,

St. Xavier's Church  
Kodugannawa  
Sri Lanka.

(Very Rev. Msgr) Theodore A. PIERIS (V.C.)  
(*General Manager of Schools, Kandy Diocese*)

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### AJNANAM (Ignorance)

Fired by a zeal for justice  
I snarled at all the unfairness around,  
And when time came  
I raised my fist to crush it down.  
Drunk with success  
I dreamed I had established the Good  
But as my lulled senses awoke  
I looked and saw another vision.  
The good I stood for was not all good.  
In many parts I saw the taint of all I sought,  
And soon enough, I looked across  
And found the black was not all bad.  
Shades and shades of black and white  
Assailed my eyes.  
Bewildered I stood  
Sifting with care, I found my earlier  
Black and white vision was far from real.  
Black and white appeared knotted  
And blended to form one strand.  
Their togetherness I perceived and  
Sought the realm where neither exists.  
That alone, beyond the divide, is the Real.

V. TERESA

# Book Reviews

## The Bible

**The Making of The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible.** By Bruce METZGER, Robert C. DENTAN, Walter HARRELSON. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1991. Pp. viii-92. \$ 7.95. ISBN 0-8028-0620-1.

This book contains four essays, three of which were previously published (chs. 1.3.4). The authors (Chairperson and two Vice-Chairpersons of the Translation Committee) give us a glimpse of many aspects of the work, policies and guidelines of the Committee over the years since it was decided to revise again the RSV in 1974.

The fundamental principle which guided the work was to "make necessary changes" and not a new translation. The NRSV was to be clearly related to its historical predecessors RSV, AV and the original parent KJV (King James Version).

The Committee was entrusted with the responsibility to remove archaic grammatical forms and correct paragraphs and punctuation (e.g., Thou, Thee...); to make a gender-inclusive translation as far as possible, except where clear male reference is in the original text (the patriarchal world view of God, as Father, King... is not removed); to make changes demanded by modern scholarship, modern usage, clarity, accuracy and euphony.

Dentan tells the story of the translation and its policies, aspects of which are repeated by Metzger. At the end Dentan suggests that "a later generation *may* feel that still further revision is necessary" (p.20). I would replace the "may" with "will." Harrelson indicates how the textual evidence of Qumran MSS, philological and exegetical scholarship and the search for clarity and precision have affected the translation. He gives interesting examples in the NRSV. In a separate essay he also traces the gradual evolution

of the strict policy of gender-inclusive language and some of the ways this was implemented, aware that problems do remain. The principles used could be applied to many hymn books.

The other essay by Metzger, is entitled "Problems Confronting Translators of the Bible." He describes the areas of difficulty and illustrates with examples the type of changes made. One major difficulty is the readers' reactions to changes in texts to which they have become so accustomed and have been an integral part of their spiritual life. This, however, would be less problematic now since 26 English Bible translations have appeared since 1952 and another 25 of only the New Testament. The words of Jerome in a letter to Pope Damasus in 383 vividly express a translator's fear: "You urge me to revise the Old Latin version, and, as it were, to sit in judgment on the copies of the Scriptures that are now scattered throughout the world; and, inasmuch as they differ from one another, you would have me decide which of them agree with the Greek original. The labour is one of love, but at the same time it is both perilous and presumptuous — for in judging others I must be content to be judged by all. Is there anyone learned or unlearned, who, having taken the volume in hand and perceiving that what one reads does not suit the reader's settled tastes, will not break out immediately into violent language and call me a forger and a profane person for having had the audacity to add anything to the ancient books, or to make any changes or corrections therein?"

The book is full of interest and is non-technical. Though many may not yet have a NRSV, the book will be valuable for them when they get a copy if they are interested in translation. A good book for a theological library.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

**The Revised Psalms of the New American Bible.** New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1992. Pp. 287. \$ 4.95. ISBN 0-8942-625-5.

This is the revised edition of the Psalms which we find in the New American Bible (1970/1986 N.T.). The purpose has been to produce a text which is more rhythmic so that it can be used for liturgical reading and singing. This new translation uses gender inclusive language throughout and consistently and this causes no unease with the prayers. Using the text I noted its rhythmic character.

The revision has also incorporated the fruits of more recent textual, philological and exegetical study. Each psalm is introduced by a brief summary in the footnotes where also at required places you find explanatory notes with an unobtrusive asterisk in the text. Many cross references are given. The presentation is pleasing and the annotations in the Hebrew text are included.

In an appendix a short essay on Praying the Psalms is included with explanations of the various kinds of psalms presented also with a chart. Another chart lists the Responsorial Psalms of all Sundays and a final chart lists the psalms for morning and evening prayer. A very useful prayer book which will easily fit into a small bag or coat pocket.

**Paddy MEAGHER**

**Eerdmans Handbook to the Bible.** Edited by David ALEXANDER and Pat ALEXANDER. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1992 (1973, 1983). Pp. 680. \$ 19.95. ISBN 0-8028-3436-1.

This is the first paperback edition of the Handbook, originally published by Lion Publishing. What strikes you immediately is the beauty, clarity of presentation, the quality and number of maps, photographs and charts and the valuable indexes which make the massive body of information readily available. There are the following indexes: Key Themes; Nations and People of Bible Lands; Who's Who in the Bible; Gazetteer of Places; Prayers of the Bible; Subject and Events, and Miracles/Parables of Jesus.

The main body of the Handbook is made up of very brief expository infor-

mation on all the books — chapter by chapter — of the OT and NT. Within this framework in small boxes or a number of pages, by means of short "articles", maps, charts and photos all types of information is given related to the biblical text. This information is archeological, geographical, historical, cultural, introductory and hermeneutical. In the first part of the Handbook the reader is led to discover the Bible, see the relationship between the Bible and life today and is informed on many general aspects of the socio-economic, cultural and religious setting of the Bible. This last section of Part One is very useful. The use of colour through out and the quality and clarity of maps, charts and photos is excellent.

I have no real reservations about the substance of the information provided except where history and the biblical text, hermeneutics and the complex and long process of writing, redaction and theology are involved. However, in these areas the Handbook is clearly evangelical and conservative in its orientations. Isaiah is the author of the whole book. A biography of Jeremiah can be distilled from that book. Basically traditional approaches are used to handle the problem of the tension between history and faith interpretation — too much factual history in the treatment of the Pentateuch, historical books and parts of the prophets. The understanding of Inspiration and Inerrancy implied in various small articles which touch on history are open to question and inadequate in my judgement. The language used is not gender inclusive and little attention is given to the influence of Patriarchy. The evils of idolatry and gross injustice and their interrelationship are not adequately highlighted in the introduction to the prophets. Some of the charts which depict history and biblical books are misleading as the origin of books seems to coincide with the events.

Therefore, I would have reservations with these aspects of the Handbook. My reservation with these orientations is that a number of the attitudes are obstacles to good interpretation of the texts for today. However, the various authors have often taken it into account a lot of



modern critical biblical scholarship.

Despite these clear reservations the *Handbook* is very useful to students and others who accept a more critical and no less devotional approach to the Bible. The information, maps, charts and photos are very useful and provide the necessary information to enable readers of the Bible understand the text in a more adequate way.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

*Exploring Scripture. How the Bible Came to Be.* By Rev. Phillip J. CUNNINGHAM, C.S.P. Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1992. Pp. xiv-216. \$ 10.95. ISBN 0-8091-3295-8.

The purpose of this simple Introduction is described adequately in the Author's words: "I tried to show the relationship between history and the Bible's creation over the centuries: how it came into existence and how it relates to other forms of literature. Put another way, I tried to expose the students to the human context of the sacred scriptures while at the same time emphasizing the Bible's unique religious character. I felt that if young people could see the Bible in relationship to their newly acquired general information their interest in scripture and in religion would not be diminished" (p.4).

The author begins the section on the Hebrew Bible with a chronological table of the Hebrew Bible's development (pp. 8-9) and the section on the NT with another such table (p.86). The Introduction explains simply the ways in which the Bible is a human literary product and the implications of this fact. Throughout he has fundamentalist approaches in the back of his mind to which students are often exposed. Beginning at 4000 BCE he surveys large periods of history and indicates the growth of the biblical tradition and the process of writing the books with comments on parts or whole books. The intent is to situate the biblical books within history. He follows the same method for the NT with a general chapter on the Christian era, a chapter on Paul and then chapters on various eras and writings belonging to the periods beginning from the apostolic age with specific

chapters on the communities in which each Gospel arose.

Each chapter has questions to help the reader absorb the main ideas and appropriate attitudes so as to understand the Bible. The book is written for college students and beginners in the study of Scripture.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

*Old Testament Introduction.* By Werner H. SCHMIDT (Translated by Mathew J. O'Connell). Bombay: St Paul Publications, 1992. Pp. xl-426. Rs 120. ISBN 81-7109-155-5.

This fine Introduction was reviewed when published in English by SCM Press and Crossroad (1984—VJTR 51 [1987] 379). It cost then in paperback £ 10.50 and so was beyond most individuals and some libraries. I shall not repeat my earlier remarks. I have used part of this Introduction as a basic text for B.Th. students for a number of years and have been very satisfied with it for information at the level of the Historical Critical Method. In 1992 most of the information is still very valuable. There are aspects of the study of the Pentateuch and some of the prophets which need to be modified or supplemented with more recent studies and tendencies.

What is important for me is that St Paul Publications have made available a fine reference book and text book at a reasonable price. TPI and St Paul can serve the Indian Christian churches by wise choices of titles published here at affordable prices now that foreign theological books cost so much. A number of copies in a good theological library will not be regretted by teachers and students.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

*Biblical Hebrew. An Introductory Grammar.* By Page H. KELLEY. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1992. Pp. xiv-453. \$ 29.95. ISBN 0-8025-0598-1.

The best way to evaluate a grammar is to either use it personally or as a textbook in class. I have not used this grammar.

The format is large (7.5 and 10 inches), the print is very clear, the presentation excellent and grammatical para-

digns well set out. The chapters are arranged so that in each you find grammatical information followed by apt exercises and vocabulary. The texts used in all the exercises are from the Bible and the references are given. Many points of grammar are exemplified and again the biblical references are given with the chosen texts. With each pointed Hebrew text there is the English translation. In the exercise which are abundant the student is asked at times to read the text (careful attention is given to provide all the types of information and practice needed to read correctly the Masoretic texts in the opening lessons [Lessons I-IV]), to analyse nouns and verbs, to translate the text or specific forms, to give specific forms of nouns, verbs, pronouns, to choose from suggested forms, to translate from sight... In other words the exercises cover the new grammatical learning of each chapter.

There is an extensive glossary (pp. 424-447) which is necessary and valuable as this grammar is for beginners. The vocabulary (pp. 374-399) and the verb charts (paradigms—pp. 400-423) are essential elements in a good grammar.

Speaking without having used the grammar and without the evidence of students' experience, I can say that the sequel of lessons seems to be well graded and no lesson demanding too much new learning. The very good recommendations by three good OT scholars (Harrelson, Nicholson and Clements) ensures that this is a fine grammar. I will quote Nicholson's (Oriental College, Oxford) comment: "The fruit of a lifetime's experience at introducing Hebrew grammar and texts to students, this book bears the hallmark of an exceptionally gifted teacher. It will rapidly command recognition as among the best of its kind"

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

**What Are They Saying About Mark?** By Frank J. MATERA. New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1987. Pp. lii-113, \$ 4.95. ISBN 0-8091-2885-3 (pbk).

Frank J. Matera's book is an admirable summary of nearly 25 years of Markan scholarship by a scholar engaged in

Gospel studies. The field of Markan studies has spawned a bewildering variety of books based on different approaches and this shows no abating. In this context it is well-nigh impossible for a beginner or non-specialist to get an adequate view of the state of the art in Markan studies easily. This book ably solves this problem. It introduces the non-specialist to the major areas of research, the dominant trends and directions and to the results. He does so by discussing over thirty different authors, presenting their ideas sympathetically yet critically and by evaluating them from a balanced scholarly position which is both well-argued and persuasive.

The content is presented in five chapters. The book starts with the discussion of the setting of the Gospel where the place and circumstances of its writing are discussed. Three major hypotheses — the Roman, the Galilaean and the Syrian origins — are discussed and evaluated. The survey reveals that there is no consensus though on balance the Roman hypothesis seems to have greater probability.

Chapter 2 and 3 deal with the central issues of Markan studies — Mark's Christology and his understanding of the role of the disciples.

The discussion of Christology discloses the two directions the studies have taken: (1) Mark's Christology as a corrective to heretical movements within the Markan church and (2) It is an attempt to present Jesus as the messianic Son of God precisely as the crucified one. While consensus eludes us here the studies which posit heretical tendencies within the church seem to be losing ground to the other trend which sees Mark's Gospel as an attempt to project Jesus as the royal Messiah, the Son of God precisely as the crucified one.

In the discussion of Mark's Christology the question of the messianic secret motif has been central and this has been recognised by most scholars. Most of them would also agree that it concerns the gradual revelation of Jesus' true identity which cannot be understood apart from his suffering destiny.

In a similar fashion two opposing trends emerge in the study of Mark's handling of the disciples: one which sees Mark as polemicizing against the disciples in response to heretical conflicts in the Church and the other which considers Mark's presentation of them as offering pastoral models for the community, even in their chequered career of struggling loyalty, failure and inconsistency. Here again, though a consensus is absent, the studies which see a pastoral intent seem to be in the ascendant.

The last two chapters cover studies which treat of more methodological issues. First, the question of sources is discussed, namely, what kind of sources Mark used and the possibility of identifying them. It also covers Mark's manner of handling his sources — was he creative or was he conservative with regard to his sources? These questions also have no definite answers. While blocks of materials in Mark can be identified, they cannot be apodictically established as entirely pre-Markan. Neither is there any consensus on the extent of Mark's reductional activity. And while some consider Mark as a radically creative theologian who freely re-wrote the sources he used, others see him as a conservative redactor who handled his sources carefully while yet leaving the marks of his theological genius on the work as a whole.

The final chapter covers the studies that treat the gospel as a literary work or as a narrative whole. They concentrate, among other things, on the question of the nature of Mark's narrative. Some of them find Mark's genre as corresponding to the known literary genres prevalent in the contemporary Greco-Roman world such as the Greek tragedy and Greek biography. Other studies treat Mark as story and as a narrative whole and find that the Gospel is a masterly story employing rhetorical devices such as drama and irony. The Gospel functions clearly as a unified story. A proof of this, perhaps, "is the consistent manner in which the author employs an omniscient, reliable narrator to lead the reader through the story world" (p. 91).

In his conclusion Matera touches on the future direction of Markan studies. It

is difficult to speak of a clear direction in the face of opposing viewpoints and plurality of methodologies in nearly every area of Markan studies. Still one would assume that the literary critical studies would and should be pursued vigorously. These could unlock the Gospel's abundant narrative riches. However, he feels that these studies must, at least eventually, lead to a consideration of historical critical questions. Literary Criticism (Narrative Criticism) per se prescind from questions of history and this must be corrected. Only a combination of these could provide us with a balanced approach to the Gospel.

Thus, the present book provides us with a valuable guide to the last quarter of a century of Markan studies both in terms of methodology and content. It is a welcome and useful contribution for students of Mark, especially to the beginner and non-specialist. It could surely serve as a sound basis for further reading and study.

George KEERANKERI, S.J.

*The Pre-Christian Paul.* By Martin HENGEL (In collaboration with Roland DEINES) London: SCM Press, 1991. Pp. xiv-162. £10.95. ISBN 0-334-02497-8.

Martin Hengel has written extensively on the pre-Christian period and the history of the early Church. He uses the years of study to attempt a description of Saul of Tarsus, educated under Gamaliel in Jerusalem, a leading young hellenist Pharisee, renowned for his zeal for the Law and the traditions of the Fathers and his persecution of the hellenist followers of the sect of the Nazarene. Hengel takes up all the contentious issues which bear on any sketch of Saul's biography prior to his experience of God revealed in the crucified and risen Jesus. The areas studied are: Saul-Tarsus and citizenship; the probability of his pharisaic education in Jerusalem which entails a study of the evidence in Acts, Galatians and Philippians, and the existence of pharisaic schools in Jerusalem at that period; the hellenists in Jerusalem, their synagogues and educational facilities; and finally the nature and reasons for Saul's harsh persecution of the new jew-

ish sect.

The major conclusions, whose probability Hengel always weighs carefully, I find convincing. Saul was born in Tarsus into an orthodox Jewish family, a Roman citizen from birth; was educated from adolescence in Jerusalem, probably under Gamaliel, as a Pharisee; he also received a Jewish hellenist education there; was a young teacher in a hellenist synagogue(s) and at times probably returned to Tarsus; was deeply offended by the hellenist Jewish Christians' attitude to the Law, ritual customs, cult and temple and so strongly opposed to their confession that the cursed crucified Jesus was the Messiah that he attempted violently to suppress the movement, probably not killing anyone.

Hengel substantiates his opinions with continual references to primary and secondary sources. There are 336 footnotes (pp 87-146) some very long which are a mine of information. When interacting with other scholars, especially Germans, he often shares the impatience, harshness and pugnacity of Paul in his letter to the Galatians.

He rightly critiques the scepticism of many with regard to Acts as a source of reliable historical evidence, the use of the argument from silence, lack of common sense and inadequate attention to the misreadings and misunderstandings of many extra-biblical sources. He re-installs Billerbeck, clearly limits the inferences he draws from insufficient evidence, and states the hypothetical nature of his conclusions.

Apart from the careful exegesis of some major parts of texts (Gal 1:13-22; Phil ch. 3; Acts chs 7.9.22.23.26; Rom 15:19; 9:1; 11:1; 2 Cor 11:22; Mt 23:13; 1 Cor 1:20), anyone interested in Jewish life in Jerusalem prior to CE 66, the Pharisees, Jewish education, Hellenists... will find many well argued judgements in the book.

I would disagree with him on the place (Rome) and consequently on the date of Philipians. I judge he reads more into some texts of Acts on occasions than can be justified and wish he were less aggressive to other scholars. I think "po-

groms" is the wrong word to describe the persecutions of the Jewish Christians. I do not agree with him that Luther and Augustine understood Paul better than others and that justification in the Lutheran sense is at the centre of Paul's religious experience and theology. Where he insists on this in the book, I think he is wrong. I would wonder whether the zeal of Phinehas can be used to throw light on Paul's zeal. However, the major aim of the book has been achieved and Paul becomes more intelligible.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

*The Reason For Romans.* By A.J. M. WEDDERBURN. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991 (1989 T.T. Clark). Pp. x-169. ISBN 0-8006-2473-4.

I had been looking forward to read this book because of the clarity and insightful quality of other writings of the author and because of the uncertainty surrounding the motive for Romans and the many conflicting opinions. I have not been disappointed as this is a very fine study.

One major disconcerting element in Paul's presentation of the "Gospel of God" was his emphasis on the discontinuity within the unfolding of God's saving plan because of the unique and universal role of his Son, Jesus Christ, and consequently the relative nature of Judaism (and all religions) as lived by himself prior to his fundamental experience ("He revealed his Son in/to me") and by all his Jewish contemporaries, whatever the tendencies within Judaism to which they may have belonged.

Though Wedderburn states that within the community there was a large group of Christians, the majority of whom were from a Gentile background who pushed the aspect of discontinuity to an extreme (cf. 11:13ff and the problem in ch. 14), yet the group composed of Christians of a Jewish heritage and possibly some Gentiles who overemphasized continuity (a Judaizing version of Christianity) were Paul's major concern. Analysing the letter Wedderburn concludes that these types of Christians judged that Paul ought to be ashamed of his Gospel which implied that God was unrighteous,

namely unfaithful to his promises and gifts to the chosen people, since Paul claimed that the Law was "abrogated" (i.e., circumcision, mosaic observances and Israel's privileges). Paul's Gospel also led to ethical irresponsibility (implications of ch 6). The author distinguishes this group from the groups Paul attacks so strenuously in Galatians and Philippians.

In this study Wedderburn's method is admirable. Initially he states the problematic (purpose of Romans and the question whether the letter was meant for the church of Rome) and the proposed solutions. He argues convincingly that Rome was the destination of the letter. Based on the evidence of the letter he describes first the situation in which Paul found himself when he wrote the letter (based on 1:1-15 and 15:14-33 and ch. 14, the Corinthian correspondence and Galatians). In the final chapter he will add an important element to Paul's decision to go to Rome — his sense of apostolic responsibility to teach the Gospel in the Gentile world. Among authors there is a large area of agreement on Paul's situation.

However the situation of the Roman church is highly controverted. Using the evidence of the letter the author gives us a picture of the groups, the tendencies, the tensions and attitudes to Paul and his Gospel in the community. He basically sees two groups who are separated by their attitudes to Judaism/Law and differ in their opinion about Paul. One group, probably the smaller group, is mainly Jewish diaspora Christians with some Gentiles, while the other is predominately composed of Gentile Christians. These groups differ in their attitude to the Jewish Law, Paul's Gospel, his visit, the collection for Jerusalem, and are antagonistic to each other.

Wedderburn analyses each part of the letter both to justify his analysis of the composition of the community, its inner problems and its attitudes to Paul's Gospel, and also to substantiate his analysis. He judges, correctly in my opinion, that Paul is writing throughout to the Roman community (ies), and evidence of this can

be found in each section (1:8-15 and 15:14-33; 1:16-11:36 [1:16-8:39 and 9-11]; 12-15:13 [12-13 and 14:1-15:13]).

The longest chapter in the study is the analysis of the argument in chs. 1-11 related to the context as described earlier in the book. There is much which is insightful in this part. The problems faced by Paul, however, are quite alien to our experience and we find it extremely difficult to enter the world of sincere Jewish Christians for whom Christ is incorporated into Judaism and who emphasize continuity and do not see the discontinuity which becomes so apparent as non-Jewish Gentiles accept God's saving revelation in Jesus Christ. Wedderburn lays special emphasis on Paul's statement, "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel" whose features are spelt out in 1:1-4 and 1:16b-18 (following Dahl). It is Paul's Gospel which is highly questionable in the eyes of the Jewish Christians as it seems to impair God's righteousness, namely his fidelity to the Covenant-Law, and promote lawlessness. The author judges the major aim of 1:18-11:36 is to substantiate his Gospel-ministry which some judge shameful and which Paul judges to uphold the righteousness of God.

One aspect which deserves attention is the study of Righteousness (pp.108-123), especially the emphasis on its 'field of meaning' in Paul's usage which helps interpreters to avoid pitfalls. The way Wedderburn relates the major objections to Paul's Gospel, and its supposed consequences in the lives of believers who accept his Gospel, to the theme of righteousness is insightful and goes a long way to explain the content of chs 1-11 and their close links to the actual situation in the Church (cf. p.123). In this connection he pays close attention to 3:1-8 and chs 9-11, the role of ch. 6 and the way 1:16-17(18) forms a bridge between the obviously situational nature of 1:1-15 and the far less obviously circumstantial character of 1:18-11:36. Throughout he insists rightly on the thematically unified character of chs 1-11 (p.127). He also follows Dahl in his suggestion about "bridge passages" (1:16-18; 3:21-23; 5:1-3)

and his division of chs 5-8.

This is an easy book to read as Wedderburn, apart from his clarity, at various points indicates to the reader the method he will follow and the steps he will take in his argumentation. No serious student of Romans (or Paul) can neglect this study of which one reviewer said with reason "... is perhaps the most even-handed and level headed presentation of the discussion to date."

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

*Commentary on Philippians. A Commentary on the Greek Text.* By Peter T. O'BRIEN. Grand Rapids: Wm.B. Eerdmans, 1991. Pp. xlii-597. \$ 39.95. ISBN 0-8028-2392-0.

While teaching Philippians recently I used this very fine book from the *New International Greek Testament Commentary* series (NIGTC). The commentary is on the Greek text and so a knowledge of Greek is needed to draw as much profit as possible from it, though there is so much contemporary scholarship condensed into it that all good students can draw great profit.

There is only one recent detailed English commentary (Hawthorne's in the *Word Series*) and yet this study does really stand alone and fills a large gap in the studies of Paul's letter in English.

As I consulted it on various texts I was impressed by the judicious nature of O'Brien's exegesis, the clear exposition of major opinions about text and background, the breadth of his mastery of research done on the letter and his painstaking care. Throughout I found his choice of the more probable meaning of difficult texts was based on good principles of pauline exegesis and a persistent attention to the text and pauline thinking, without the prejudices of past or present theological concerns.

O'Brien argues correctly in my opinion for the integrity of the letter. I have not found the arguments for three letters convincing. He opts for the Roman imprisonment as the place and time of writing. I judge that Ephesus and an imprisonment there (not mentioned directly in any letter) as the more likely place and time of writing. I agree that the oppo-

nents in ch 3 (vv.18-20 also) are Jewish Christian missionaries whose ethical way of life is also open to strong criticism. Personal animosity and rivalry explain 1:15-17 while antagonism from groups within the local population would account for 1:27-28.

I paid special attention to 2:6-11 which receives particular attention (pp.186-271). I agree that there is no reference to Adam, to Genesis 1-3 and Is 53 in the hymn which could easily be a pauline creation. I agree with the explanation of "did not grasp" in the sense of "did not take advantage of/exploit..." (the form of God or equality with God). The *kenosis* refers not to the form of God or equality to God but to the 'taking advantage' which is completely ruled out. The "doulos" refers probably to contemporary slave society (not to the "servant"/suffering just person). The explanation of the text and the additional appendices are very informative and rich.

As a number of recent authors O'Brien interprets "through the faith of Christ" (3:9) as Christ's faithfulness and not, as traditional, faith in Christ. I am inclined now to accept this in a number of pauline texts. I am always uneasy with opinions which identify 'self righteousness', in the sense of moral achievement intended as a claim upon God (cf. p. 396 on 3:9) as the basis for Paul's criticism of the law. Actually a different type of righteousness affecting the most radical type of alienation from God is at stake in Paul's understanding of God's action in Christ.

There are times when the reader is not sure whether O'Brien accepts or just lists certain opinions. Mercifully the footnotes run according to sections of the text and so we are spared fn 520! This is an excellent commentary, very easy to use, very well presented and so rich that it will be now the classical English commentary on this letter.

Paddy MEAGHER

*The Gospel Of Jesus Christ.* By Pere M. J. LAGRANGE, O.P., Parts I and II (in one volume). Bangalore: Theological Publication in India, 1992. Pp.xcv-320 and 350. Rs 80.

This book was originally published in English in 1938 and in French in 1928. It is a type of biography of Jesus Christ based on Lagrange's Greek Synopsis of the four Gospels and on his exegetical judgments which can be found in his commentaries on the Gospels. He describes the book in these words: "Since we claim no more than to present the Gospel in that manner (using Luke's order and John's chronology), our present work is little more than a rapid commentary on the Synopsals along with a few historical observations, following the more or less certain, more or less probable, or the merely conjectural order of events" (xxlii). He is aware that problems remain which he is unable to solve.

The book was written when critical biblical study was accepted in the Protestant Churches and rejected to a large measure by the Catholic Church (the shades of Modernism). Lagrange, who suffered much because of his critical studies, was aware of the value of aspects of critical methods and also the extremes and the influence of Liberal Protestant writers who accepted Jesus the teacher and rejected Jesus, Son of God and Saviour. He was aware of the specific character of each Gospel which must be respected, the problem of similarity and dissimilarity in the description of events, their order and in the wording of Jesus' teaching.

After writing this commentary on the Gospels — biography of Jesus — Lagrange explicitly replies in the Epilogue to Liberal Protestant positions and the writing of Renan in an apologetic manner.

Though we must honour our ancestors and be aware of the history of Catholic biblical studies, I do not understand why TPI published this long book. I do not see how Fr Pathrapankal can say of the book that it "contains very useful and scientific insights about the meaning and message of the Gospels" (xvi). That was true in the 1920s/30s/40s but not for ordinary students of the Gospels today who need to change so many attitudes to the Gospels if they are to be able to interpret them in India and for India. Surely there are other expensive and fine basic books

which we ought to make available at Rs 80 to assist the study of the Gospels.

The book ought to be in any good theological library that we many admire a great scholar of our past and be inspired to respond to the challenges our country and people.

Paddy MEACHER

*Images of Jesus. Contributions to Biblical Method.* Edited by Fritz Leo LENTZEN-DEIS, S.J. Bombay: St. Paul Publications, 1988. Pp. 192. Rs. 35. \$ 6.95. ISBN 81-7109-038-9.

Using the methods of biblical exegesis, the General Editor and a team of young Latin American scholars (E. Sanchez Roman, J.I. Flores Gaitan and C.A. Mora Paz) describe various ways of looking at Jesus. Was Jesus a revolutionary, a rabbi, or an authentic religious person? Jesus' call to discipleship is studied by an analysis of Mk 1:16-20, the forgiver of sins is analysed through Mk 2:1-12, and the attitude of Jesus towards wealth and powerlessness is described using Lk 12:13-21.

The articles by different authors are of vastly different quality. The exegesis, though thorough, makes for dry and difficult reading. There is a ten-page Prologue by the Indian Editor, Paul Drego, presenting the basic insights of the four writers, and a translator's Preface (H. Pascual). A rich bibliography, the End Notes and the Abbreviations cover the last forty pages. On the whole, it is a good attempt to make the Gospels relevant to today's world and in particular to developing countries.

J. MISQUITTA

## Theology

*Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement.* Edited by Nicholas LOSSKY, Jose Miguez BONINO, John POBEE, Tom STRANSKY, Geoffrey WAINWRIGHT and Pauline WEBB. Geneva: WCC Publications/Grand Rapids: Wm.B. Eerdmans, 1991. Pp. xvi-1196. \$ 79.95. ISBN 2-8254-1025-X and 0-8028-2428-5.

This Dictionary is a remarkable achievement of a corporate ecumenical undertaking apparently accomplished in

less than five years. It is more than a dictionary of the ecumenical movement: it is a dictionary of theology with an ecumenical perspective as well. Many of its entries deal with basic doctrinal issues, and teachers of theology will be wise to consult the respective entry in DEM before starting their particular courses. There they will find substantial articles on "God, Christ the Holy Spirit, the Church, redemption and salvation, grace and faith, the word and the sacraments, the last things" and many other topics showing the convergence of the teaching of the churches in these areas, and also articles on controversial issues like authority or ministry (xii). As explained in the four-page introduction by the editors, other areas covered by the 600 entries are the activities of the WCC and the ecumenical interests of various churches, issues of a social, legal, cultural and ethical nature tackled from the perspective of Christian faith and commitment (e.g., Development, AIDS, the Debt Crisis, ...), areas of evangelism and mission, worship and piety, ecumenical relations between churches in general and specific churches and short biographies of ecumenically important people (from India V.S. Azariah, Sarah Chakko, J.R. Chandran, P.D. Devanandan, Paulose Mar Gregorios, Samuel L. Parmar, S.J. Samartha and M.M. Thomas — most of them signed by Ans J. van der Bent).

The articles are concise, reliable, informative, giving cross references and a short bibliography (mostly in English) to guide further study. Biographical entries also mention the most relevant publications of the persons in question.

The work is ecumenical in spirit, in content, and in origin. The six editors mentioned on the title page belong respectively to the Russian Orthodox, Evangelical Methodist, Anglican, Roman Catholic and, the last two, Methodist churches. The other 16 members of the editorial board belong to still different Church traditions, including the Church of South India (K.C. Abraham). If I count well, there are nearly 400 authors among whom about 60 are Catholics, and seven from India (K.C. Abraham, K.M. George, Paulose Mar Gregorios, C.I. Itty,

Ninan Koshi, Goervarghese Mar Outhathios and M.M. Thomas).

I find a lacuna which, though difficult, I think should be filled in a later edition for the benefit of the non-theologian educated person, whether Christian or non-Christian. We are often asked in India to put some order into the complex maze of churches and denominations so often mentioned in Christian or secular literature, in which the lay person gets lost. However difficult it may be to fit every church and denomination into any schema, an effort could be made to present a historical and/or doctrinal outline of the traditions and movements that have given rise to different churches with their specific traditions and common traits. It would well seem that a clear explanation of the emergence of the variety of churches and their parentages is a natural complement of an ecumenical dictionary. The inquirer deserves to be helped in the effort to situate the various churches he or she may come across in the ecclesiastical map of the Christian world.

I spotted another small slip. In the biographical sketch of Cardinal Bea, besides recognising his valuable contribution to the Vatican II decree of Divine Revelation, it is said that he "presided over the drafting of *three* documents," after which only two, the documents on religious freedom (DH) and on non-Christian religions (NA), are mentioned. The missing document is of course the one on ecumenism (UR).

This is not to put into doubt what I said earlier about the high standards of this Dictionary which should find its place in any serious library. I would like to end this review by quoting the words of WCC General Secretary Emilio Castro in the Preface, which give the *raison d'être* of DEM: "The energy of the ecumenical movement has always been the creative visions, solemn covenants, courageous engagements and fervent prayers of countless women and men, churches and groups. But the ecumenical story is also one of meetings and reports and documents, programmes and declarations and statements, theological convergences and parallel guidelines. As



this movement has, by God's grace, grown and expanded, the amount of written material with which one must be acquainted in order effectively to build on the past would fill a good sized library. For those without ready access to such documentary resources, this *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement* will be indispensable; even for those who have such access it will provide a reliable starting point for their explorations."

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

**Bread and Breath. Essays in Honour of Samuel Rayan S.J.** (Jesuit Theological Reflections No.5). Edited by T.K. JOHN. Anand: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1991. Pp. xii-336. Rs. 66.

*Bread and Breath* is a collection of essays in honour of Samuel Rayan S.J. on the occasion of his seventieth birth anniversary. Samuel is a much loved and much appreciated professor of Systematic Theology at Vidyajyoti. He has been associated with this Institution for two decades having served as its principal from 1972 to 1975. He is also a renowned theologian nationally and internationally.

The title 'Bread and Breath' expresses the two powerful poetic symbols which form the two poles of his theological journey. *Bread* stands for food for all and the justice that makes it possible. *Breath* stands for life in its totality as also the Spirit who inspires a commitment to liberative action. In Samuel Rayan's theological language, the title could also signify the Eucharist and its deepest meaning.

The book is divided into four parts. Part I titled "Tributes to a Theologian" tries to capture some of the aspects of the rich and multi-faceted personality of Samuel Rayan: his deep spirituality rooted in the Bible, the Christian tradition and the Indian experience of the Divine, his creativity, his poetic vein, his personal charm, his pedagogical skills, his simplicity. Samuel Rayan is seen as one who relates theology to life and to people's concrete struggles for liberation from all forms of oppression because theology cannot be divorced from history. In all this however, Samuel Rayan is only in search of truth. He speaks strongly

and fearlessly but "he never stoops to antagonism nor utilizes frontal attacks on anyone" (Barbara Hendricks).

Part II is titled "Theology for Tomorrow" and consists of essays by eminent Latin American and Asian theologians on issues very dear to Samuel and along the lines of his own theological pilgrimage. Talking from the Latin American perspective of massive poverty and oppression Jon Sobrino redefines theology as "amor quaerens intellectum" as against the classical definition of theology as "fides quaerens intellectum." The theological pursuit needs to start from a subjective pre-understanding, i.e., the option for the poor and the specific objective locus, i.e., the world of the poor. Faith emerges from praxis.

Applying this line of thought to the Indian situation of mass poverty, exploitation, caste discrimination, etc., coupled with a profound spirituality, George Soares-Prabhu pinpoints the alienation of the Indian theologian and the utter cultural alienation of the Indian Seminaries and the training they impart. Consequently the entire Indian church with all its structures is an alienated church which has not as yet shed its predominantly colonial character. What the Indian church requires today is not a cosmetic inculturation but an inculturation which is a real "conversion." We have to distance ourselves from the Western models of theologising as also from the inward-looking Ashram spirituality which is heavily Brahminical. Theologising in India should be done from the hermeneutical standpoint of the "local church" which in its proper theological meaning stands for a Christian community with a cultural identity of its own. The vision proposed by George Soares-Prabhu does make a lot of sense but in the given circumstances I wonder how much of it is really practical.

The liberative thrust of theology, a reflection on the on-going transformative action against the status quo, carries the discussion further into issues such as eco-theology, women's liberation, moral commitment in a divided world, a preferential commitment to *antiyodaya* for *sarvodaya* and the like. Theology in

America, a combination of deeply African and deeply Christian elements. The political dimension of forgiveness from a typical Japanese perspective is brought out by Kosuke Koyama.

Part III deals with "Spirituality of Action." The essays tend to articulate a spirituality that both emanates from and sustains a liberative theology and liberative action. True Christian spirituality is not flight from the world but involvement with people and their lives, a participation in the struggle of the poor for justice, a commitment to building a community of freedom, equality and fellowship. It demands selflessness, an option to be poor and being in tune with the Mystery. In the specifically Indian context, the liberative Christian spirituality will also be grounded on the "nishkama karma" of the Gita.

Part IV is titled "Theology In Dialogue" of which Samuel Rayan himself is a prominent representative. Theology today cannot remain narrowly denominational. It has to be inter-denominational and ecumenical in its widest sense and an ecumenical theology will include the following: the perspective of the poor and the oppressed, the feminine perspective, an openness to other religious traditions and ideologies, commitment to the unity and integrity of the whole creation. The pluralistic context in which we live throws up one fact: that every religion is unique yet every religion is also relative. The challenge it poses to theologians is to develop an inter-religious hermeneutics and a culture of dialogue.

Felix Wilfred's essay on Third World Tourism could well have been placed in Part II.

G. Gispert-Sauch S.J. concludes the volume with a very useful bibliography of the writings of Samuel Rayan from 1947 to early 1991.

The volume is a fitting tribute to the man who has endeavoured all his life to free theology from the arid jargon of the schoolmen and to immerse it in the rich language of the poor and the oppressed, in their imagery and their poetry. For Samuel Rayan theology is a search, a meditation, a pilgrimage and above all a commitment. He can unearth the treas-

ures of Grace through his favourite stories of his Amiri and the festering toe, the running nose, the soiled handkerchief, etc., or describe hope as "standing on tip-toe, gazing expectantly on the horizon." It is this Sam who has influenced the theological orientation of generations of students of whom I am privileged to be one. If Vidyajyoti could succeed in publishing the "trove of unpublished written material neatly stacked up in shelf upon shelf in his room" that certainly would be a great service done to the Church in India and in the world at large.

Pratiksha  
Delhi.

Fr. Anil COUTO

Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan. Collection (Volume 4). Edited by Frederick E. CROWE and Robert M. DORAN. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988. Pp. xviii-349. N.p. ISBN 0-8020-3438-1.

This is the second edition, revised and augmented, of *Collection: Papers by Bernard Lonergan* (1967). The present edition omits the biographical section, adds editorial notes to the articles and attempts to ensure the text of the essays are as close as possible to the original as earlier editors had worked on the essays. A Glossary of Latin and Greek words/phrases is added and some restricted editorial work has been done on the original texts. The essays have not been made ecumenical nor has gender inclusive language been used.

The essays span about 25 years of Lonergan's scholarly life and will be valuable for advanced students concerned about method and Lonergan's theological insights and contributions. I list the titles of the articles so that readers may be aware of the contents: The Form of Inference; Finality, Love, Marriage; On God and Secondary Causes; The Assumption and Theology; The Natural Desire to See God; A Note on Geometrical Possibility; The Role of a Catholic University in the Modern World; Theology and Understanding; Isomorphism of Thomist and Scientific Thought; Insight: Preface to a Discussion; Christ as Subject: A Reply; Openness and Religious Experi-

ence; *Metaphysics as Horizon; Cognitive Structure; Existenz and Aggiornamento; Dimensions of Meaning*. The collection deserves a place in a comprehensive library serving Faculties of Theology.

Paddy MEAGHER

**The Actuality of Atonement.** By Colin E. GUNTON. Grand Rapids: Wm.B. Eerdmans, 1989. Pp. xiv-222. ISBN 0-8028-3664-X.

Professor of Christian Doctrine at King's College, University of London, Gunton has written on Christology (*Yesterday and Today*, DTL 1983) and on the Trinity (*Enlightenment and Alienation*, Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1985). His field is classical Western theology specially in relation to modern thought since the Enlightenment. In this new book he takes up the question of soteriology studying specially the three (or four) main metaphors, derived from the NT, that have been used in Christian thought to convey an understanding of the work of Christ: victory over evil, God's justice in the face of disorder, sacrifice for sin. Connected specially with the second is the metaphor of redemption or buying back. The various metaphors derive therefore from vocabulary of the battlefield, the law courts, the religious altar and the slave-market and they complement and correct one another.

In the first chapter Gunton outlines the criticism by the Enlightenment of this central traditional doctrine and the way the Enlightenment shrinks the Christian understanding of the Paschal mystery. He then studies the role of "metaphor" not only in theology but in fact in all areas of human knowledge. He shows it to be not only a source of much understanding and the best way to deal with the realities of faith but also the means for the human mind to discover the world and humanize it: all advance in knowledge implies a new use of metaphor whereby language itself acquires new meanings. Gunton's explanation of metaphor is practically identical with what Roman Catholic theologians normally call analogy — with the advantage that the word does not carry the load of historical controversy associated with "analogy."

His theological discourse remains within the parameters of classical theology (with occasional reference to the Oriental tradition) but opens up to today's concerns and self-understanding. To do this he profits much from the Patristic tradition, specially Athanasius and Irenaeus. In the nature of things, the thought of Anselm of Canterbury comes for much commentary, while the influence of the best insights of the Reformation is also evident. With concise and lucid language Gunton shows that the metaphors have still much to tell modern Christians about God, themselves and their role in the world. He looks at the metaphors both from the perspective of human experience, and also from God's way of dealing with the human, showing how they have a universal application provided one does not dissociate redemption from creation. In the modern world they have much to say about the problems of social justice and ecology.

Although the book is not directly concerned with the role of various religions in the saving action of God, still it touches the live core of the problem by bringing out the Christian faith perceptions about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Professional theologians and advanced students will derive much profit from it as Gunton touches with a sure hand the heart of theology and shows up the misunderstandings of modern thought in this respect. Gunton's colleague at King's College, Christoph Schwobel, calls this "the most significant attempt at reconstructing the doctrine of Atonement in the last two decades."

G. GISPert-SAUCH, S.J.

**Redeeming Time.** Atonement through Education. By Timothy GORRINGE. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1986. Pp. xvi-239. £ 6.95. ISBN 0-232-51701-0.

This is another study on the Atonement, whose review is overdue. Unlike Gunton's, it arises from the Indian theological experience, as the author was for many years professor at the Tamilnadu Theological Seminary, Madurai, "widely known throughout the world as a centre of adventurous innovation in relating theological training to the realities of the Church's mission" (Newbigin's Fore-

word). The author derives his inspiration and articulation from the involvement of the students with the oppressed people along the lines of Paolo Freire's famous thrust. Gorringe acknowledges the usefulness of the metaphors studied by Gunton in articulating the meaning of the work of Jesus. But he finds that in the context of liberative action and religious pluralism the saving role of Christ may be better expressed as God's education for critical consciousness, which is the concrete way in which actual liberation is seen to happen among the oppressed. Education in this context cannot of course mean just removal of ignorance or transfer of knowledge: it implies freeing oneself from self-centredness and entering into relatedness which can only happen with the encounter with another and the exorcism of the forces that prevent our full development. The stress is on the importance of solidarity in God's work of redemption: the word *homousios* meant for the Church not only the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father but also the Son's and therefore God's solidarity with the human race. This leads him to stress the importance of God's Kingdom that comes not only as a gift but also as a human task: "Your Kingdom come" is parallel to "Your will be done." The *doing* of the will of God is central to the message of Jesus. Gorringe rejects therefore the overstress on eschatology in the consciousness of Jesus and shows a more clear historical consciousness in him.

Two chapters are devoted to the relation of the Spirit to the Kingdom of God which remains an ongoing task. The last chapters deal with grace, the sacraments, the Eucharist and the role of religions and the Church in God's saving action. Gorringe has perceptive insights in all these areas.

The value of the book is that it draws from the experience of peoples' movements and that it follows the lines of liberation theology. The thought is solidly argued with recourse to the biblical testimony that includes not only the New Testament but the whole of the Biblical record. The book should be required reading for good courses on Christology in India.

## Religion

**World Religions and Human Liberation.** Edited by Dan COHN-SHERBOK. [Faith Meets Faith Series] Maryknoll: Orbis, 1992. Pp. viii-143. \$ 16.95 pb. ISBN 0-88344-795-9.

Liberation theology is not a phenomenon restricted to Latin America even to the Christian world. It has become in some form a characteristic trend of other religions. Many of them have movements that reinterpret their own traditional teachings and modes of being to include a specific concern for salvation, individual and collective, already now within our terrestrial existence, while not denying the transcendental dimension. This is what is basically meant by the formula "liberation theology."

The book wants to show this by bringing out the liberationist aspects of Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and the African Religions. Before presenting these various studies Deane Williams Ferm explains the main insights of liberation theology as it emerged in Latin America. After this, liberation is studied from the perspectives of the religions mentioned above. This is followed by "provisional" reflections by Jon Sobrino on eastern religions and liberation after his visit to India in the late eighties. Perhaps the most interesting piece of the collection is the concluding essay by Williams R. Burrows on the contents of the symposium. He first reflects on what he calls the commensurability of the word "liberation" in respect to various religions. The question is really whether the word as used in liberation theology has at least an analogical similarity with the word used in other religions, or whether we are using equivocal language. His question is not vain: for example, the article of S. Palnadath focuses on "*mukti*", the Hindu Notion of Liberation." One can legitimately ask whether *mukti* conveys the essential thrust of liberation as found in Latin American theology. Burrows believes that the word is clearly commensurable to the language of Judaism and Islam: in both religions there is a clearly this-worldly dimension in the respective concepts of liberation. In fact, he

thinks that liberation in this sense is more central in these two religions than in the main Christian tradition itself, whose distinctive message is not so much that justice and love must be the task of the Christian in this world — for that was already the Old Testament message — but that the power for such love and justice comes to us from the Spirit of the risen Lord. In fact ancient and medieval Christianity insisted less on the "liberative" aspect of the message. If liberalism was a moment of compromise in Christian thinking, Liberation Theology is a radical rethinking of the Christian evangelical task to recover the essential element of liberation. For this Liberation Theology roots itself in the Old Testament. Christocentrism intrinsic to its Christian character seems to constitute a problem for other religions. The conclusion of this section is that liberation praxis can be subsumed into all the various religious traditions studied, more or less successfully, but only as a key to a renewal when they look towards the future, not as a means to retrieve their specific past.

The second part of this essay stresses the ambiguity of religions in regard to liberation and the need to remember the criticism of religion made by Hume, Feuerbach, Marx, Nietzsche and Freud. There are such doctrines as that of Providence that may act as a dampening for the revolutionary force. And the bonding that religion brings about can also be the source of much fanaticism and communal strife, as is obvious all over the world. Besides each tradition has a plurality of trends that can support many different interpretations and political stands. In other words, religions are ambiguous phenomena and their liberationist potential limited. Hence Burrows is in favour of stressing the "gains" of modernity and enforcing a relative autonomy of the political, economic, cultural and religious realms, without trying to let religion (or any other realm) dominate the others. Not everybody will be convinced of this "liberalism" and clearly "western" thesis, but the warning about the ambiguity of religion and the danger in over-playing its role is well taken. In short, this is a book that makes you think

afresh.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

**Muslims in Dialogue: The Evolution of A Dialogue.** Edited by Leonard SWIDLER. Lewiston/Queenston/Lampeter, The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992. Pp. xviii-535. ISBN 0-88946-499-5.

This book is extremely helpful to those Christians and Muslims who want to engage in dialogue. The scope of the articles, although addressed mainly to Christians and Muslims, is much wider as it includes Jews, Buddhists, and Hindus. They encourage the reader to discover the historical, theological, economic and political reasons why Christians and Muslims — and also Jews — experience themselves as being different.

The first section of the book deals with Muslim perceptions of dialogue on the basis of historical, theological, legal, social and political differences and similarities with Christianity. The second section deals with Christian attitudes to dialogue and the theological difficulties Christians are faced with in the course of dialogue with Muslims. The third section points out the important contribution the Jews can make in efforts at dialogue between Muslims and Christians. The fourth part demonstrates the tradition of and the efforts for dialogue between Hindus and Muslims in two articles by Riffat Hassan and Kana Mitra. And the final section deals with issues pertaining to the Muslims' stance on human rights and religious liberty that calls forth a Buddhist response.

The book makes very good reading and explodes the myth that Muslims are not interested in dialogue. However, it does make it very clear that Muslims are usually interested in dialogue only when they find themselves in situations where they experience intellectual freedom and are not entirely dependent on the Muslim community for their political, social and economic needs. Hence, the subtitle, *The Evolution of a Dialogue* is apt.

Desiderio PINTO, S.J.

**The Buddhist Sutra of the Lotus Flower. Its Essence and Reinterpretation.** By Surendra PRAKASH. Delhi: ISPCK (for

CISRS, Bangalore), 1991. Pp. 83. Rs 30. ISBN 81-7214-017-7.

The Lotus Sutra, or the Saldhar-mapundarika Sutra, is surely one of the great texts of Mahayana Buddhism, but one whose verbosity, repetitions and extravagant exaggerations stop many people from reading it. It has been the object of much study by scholars from the early times of Buddhist research — it was translated into French already in 1852 (Burnouf) and into English in 1884 (Kern). Suresh Prakash offers here an introduction to the Sutra and a summary of its contents. Like in the Sutra itself, acknowledgedly "full of self-praise," the style is totally eulogistic, innocent of any reinterpretation, and is generous in promises of spiritual benefits, but quite short in practical applications. It offers a rather superficial presentation of the Sutra which, in the absence of an oral teaching of the master is not likely to influence people spiritually. "Hinayana" (p. 18), a contemptuous word used by the enemies of the respectable Theravada tradition, should have been avoided. The spelling of Sanskrit words is mediocre (*samyag* is consistently misspelt as *samvay* on p. 78, and *samyagdrishti* is unrecognisable under the garb of *samvayorshti*). It's puzzling to guess why the CISRS and the ISPCCK decided to publish this booklet written in a rather outdated style.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

No Religion Is an Island. Abraham Joshua Heschel and Interreligious Dialogue. Edited by Harold KASIMOW and Byron L. SHERWIN. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1991. Pp. xxvi-205. \$ 16.95 pb. ISBN 0-88344-769-X.

In the field of ecumenism we in India have perhaps missed the importance of the Jewish-Christian dialogue which has had so much influence in the Church in modern times. One must remember that the Council Decree *Nostra Aetate* of such importance in dialogue was largely due to the initiatives of Jewish leaders in dialogue with the Catholic Church.

One of the most influential figures in his dialogue was Abraham Joshua Heschel who died just twenty years ago after a fruitful life of theological and ecumenical ministry.

The weekly *American* devoted its issue of March 10, 1973, to his memory. One may also read about his contribution in *Worship* 49 (1975) 583-96.

This book consists of an essay by Heschel himself that bears the title given to the book and develops a theology of inter-religious dialogue from the perspective of a Jewish faith. To this are added a number of tributes to his person and work, some in the form of personal memories of the Rabbi, others in the form of theological analyses. His daughter H. Susanne gives us an inside glimpse of this warm and deeply spiritual man, and the Jesuit Daniel Berrigan speaks of "My Friend", recalling their shared concern and action for the ending of the Vietnam war and for the reestablishment of a friendly society in their country. Arvind Sharma speaks of the Hindu-Jewish dialogue comparing Heschel's to Radhakrishnan's thought, the point of similarity of the two religions being, he says, that both eschew conversion. Sri Lankan Antony Fernando analyses the Rabbi's thought from an Asian perspective, specially Buddhism.

Belonging to a non-conversion (and therefore basically ethnic) religion, Heschel finds proselytism, specially among Jews, an offence to dialogue. He stresses that religion must necessarily remain a human and limited reality. God alone is transcendent. "Does not the all-inclusiveness of God contradict the exclusiveness of any particular religion?" (13-14). The reconciliation of religions may be God's plan for eschatology, but in this aeon "perhaps it is the will of God that . . .

there should be diversity in our forms of devotion and commitment to Him" (14). The Christian might comment that his faith in the resurrection of Christ makes him share already now in the eschatological hope and experience, and this is the reason for the NT preaching among Jews and gentiles alike. But we must not forget: "The first and most important prerequisite of interfaith is faith. It is only out of the depth of involvement in the unending drama that began with Abraham that we can help one another towards an understanding of our situation. Interfaith must come out

of depth, not out of a void absence of faith. It is not an enterprise for those who are half-learned or spiritually immature" (10-11). He is not for an easy ireneism. Opposition remains and need not be papered over: "Granted that Judaism and Christianity are committed to contradictory claims, is it impossible to carry on a controversy without acrimony, criticism without loss of respect, disagreement without disrespect? The problem to be faced is: how to combine loyalty to one's own tradition with reverence for different traditions? How is mutual esteem between Christian and Jew possible?" (11).

Rabbi Abraham Heschel showed it by his life. Many ecumenists and dialoguists seem today to fail in one or other of the two attitudes to be reconciled. This book is a fine tribute to him whose life is perhaps best summarised by Berrigan — "a man of prayer, and a man on the line." (68).

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

## Spirituality

**Find Your Roots and Take Wing.** By Sr VANDANA. Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 1991. Pp. xvi-116. N.p. ISBN 81-7086-152-7.

This booklet contains three essays/talks by Sr Vandana presented on different occasions having to do with the central theme of formation (growth) and inculturation — hence the suggestive Chinese proverb used as title of the work. The first talk, given in Bangkok in 1975, deals directly with the formation of religious and their inculturation in the Asian reality. The second, on spiritual formation in Ashrams, was sent for a meeting of the Institute of Formation Spirituality in Pittsburg, USA, in 1990. The third has no date and no footnotes and is a plea for open monastic communities in the West, on the model of Indian Ashrams.

The ideas overlap somewhat. The themes, symbols and quotations dear to Sr Vandana come up in various forms — Eastern spirituality, interiority, the cave of the heart, silence, sannyasa, the guru, renunciation, intuitiveness rather than rational thinking, *ekagrata*, *niskama*

*karma*, the upside-down tree of Gita 15.1 (which has a strange fascination for her — strange as in the Gita the tree is a symbol of *samsara* with its endless round of births and deaths), the oft-quoted Katha Upanishad 1.3.14 ("Arise, awake, and be aware of the boon you have received"), etc.

The first two essays have abundant references and quotations from many sources, evidence of the wide reading of the author and the care with which she picks up and collects wise sayings that stimulate her thinking. Appendix II of the first essay offers summary notes of a talk given in 1975 by Filipino Jesuit C. Arevalo (I guess — the book spells his name Aravelo) obviously taken by hand and in a great hurry. He could not possibly have said that "cultus" means "rude, uneducated, unlettered" (44); and the initial quotation from Cardinal "Taraneon" should be attributed to Cardinal Tarancon, or better, Enrique Tarancon. ATC keeps up its poor standards of proof reading, punctuation and editing. There is much wisdom in these pages which one would hope forms today the accepted orthodoxy of the Church, at least in Asia, even if our practice falls well behind the accepted theory. I do not know, however, if it is overpessimism or over-optimism that makes the author hope that her contribution will help the leaders in the Church from 3000 AD (viii). It should help well before that — even today!

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

**Tough Minds Tender Hearts. Six Prophets of Social Justice.** By William O. PAULSELL. Mahwah/New York: Paulist Press. 1990. Pp. vi-207. \$ 11.95. ISBN 0-8091-3184-6.

The title comes from Martin Luther King. The author has chosen as his six prophets M. Luther King, Simone Weil, Dag Hammarskjöld, Dorothy Day, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Dom Helder Camara. All were in various ways involved in public life, some in an outstanding way and all have had profound effects on sectors of modern society and life.

In dealing with each person, Paulsell gives a biographical sketch and

then describes the spirituality and theology of each person under various headings, using their writings as much as possible. What emerges is the relationship between their consistent and effective involvement in public life and their spirituality. I was moved by King as I had not known him as a theologian. I found it more difficult to enter the spiritual world of Weil. The spiritual resources of Hammarikjold and Bonhoeffer and maybe Helder Camara would be known to many from their writings, while Americans would be well acquainted with Dorothy Day. This is a good book, full of inspiration and challenge. These persons are not only prophets but they also model for us the ways of doing theology in context.

Paddy MEAGHER

*Letters to Contemplatives.* By William JOHNSTON. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991. Pp. x-112. \$ 9.95. ISBN 0-88344-784-3.

These letters were written between January 1989 and June 1990 during the author's sabbatical. Johnston would be known to many for his books on spirituality (*Christian Mysticism Today*, *Silent Music*,...). In the preface we are introduced to the women and men to whom the letters are written, with just a few details that enable us to understand the content of the letters. We only listen to the answers — one side of a conversation which has been going on for some years in most cases.

Each letter is about a particular subject — e.g., Christian Mysticism, Why Preach the Gospel, Love and Intimacy (to a Priest), Jesus in Asia, Self and Nonself... Common threads running through most of the letters are reflections on prayer, mysticism, interreligious dialogue and Eastern spirituality. Johnston is well equipped to reflect on these and other subjects because of his years in Japan, initiation into Zen, constant interest in mysticism and Eastern spirituality and his concern about the crisis in Western Christianity.

Readers will profit specially if they are going through attitudinal changes. I am often uneasy with the word mysticism — for the connotations of the

esoteric and perhaps elitism. However, Johnston is correct in his insistence on the call to, need for and value of ever deeper authentic prayer and union with God and the danger of aspects of modern spirituality which do not value the limitless nature of our faith relationship with God beyond all the techniques and secondary types of spiritual phenomena. This book will help Western Christians to be open to and aware of the richness of Eastern religions and traditions.

Paddy MEAGHER

*My Vocation is Love. Therese of Lisieux.* By Jean LAFRANCE. Bombay: St Paul Publications, 1990. Pp. 173. Rs 45. ISBN 81-7109-148-2.

This book is an enthusiastic study of spirituality rooted in the writings of Therese and wishing to capture her spirit and vision. In a way Lafrance comments upon Therese's spiritual journey and her writings, applying her teaching to our lives. There is an exhortative tone running throughout. I found that the quotations of Therese stood out from the author's text and have a depth, clarity and appeal which the rest of the text generally lacks. Any exposure to and commentary upon and attempts to spell out the spiritual experiences and spiritual teaching and heritage of Therese can only nourish a Christian life.

Paddy MEAGHER

*New Directives on Syro-Malabar Liturgy. A Study.* By Dr Anthony NARICULAM.

*Spirituality of the Syro-Malabar Church.* By George NEDUNGATT, S.J., Alwaye: Star Publications. 1988/1989. Pp. iv-64/xvi-60.

The first booklet studies, explains and clarifies the major features of the directives of the Oriental Congregation on Liturgy. The directives with an accompanying letter of the Congregation for Oriental Churches are included in an appendix. Another offers Historical Data about the process of reform beginning in 1934. The second booklet is an expansion of two lectures given in Rome at the Centre for Indian and Interreligious Studies (1987) on the Spirituality of the Syro-Mal-



history of the spirituality, its major features and traits, the dimensions of mission and inculturation and the saints of this tradition. Important booklets for Indian Christians of different traditions for mutual understanding.

**Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.**

**Praying For Healing: The Challenge.** By Benedict HERON, O.S.B. Bombay: St Paul Publications, 1992. Pp.x-154. Rs 38. ISBN 81-7109-144-X.

The author belongs to the monastic community of Cockfosters (England) and has been involved in the healing ministry since 1972. He has experienced both physical and inner healing himself and has both had a very fruitful healing ministry and been exposed to the healing ministry in many Christian churches.

He writes first of all for a Catholic audience: not that Catholics are wary of healing but they normally expect healing at pilgrimage centres and not in their own homes and parishes. Heron states quite emphatically that the healing ministry (physical and spiritual) ought to be part of the normal Christian life and many lay women and men are called to accept this charism of the Spirit and that Catholics ought to expect healing in Jesus' name in all sorts of places and circumstances.

In India, in relation to the Charismatic and other prayer movements in the Catholic Church there is great awareness of and the practice of the healing ministry.

There is also emphasis upon the healing ministry in other churches and movements. Both of these facts leave some Catholics and Church leaders uneasy. The present book, while strongly affirming and giving abundant evidence of healing (interior and physical) is sober and discerning. I think many Catholic priests uneasy with or attracted to this ministry ought to read it. I also think the book ought to be read by charismatic groups and their leaders. The book would be valuable for many lay people to deepen their faith in the living Lord Jesus Christ.

There is wisdom and clarity in many of the observations and reflections. The author is realistic and has a vibrant faith. My only reservations about the healing ministry are these. There is a persistent danger that the social responsibilities of Christians are forgotten. The great sickness of so many of us is our lack of adequate responsibility for and commitment to justice, the poor, the socially marginalized... The prejudices, ignorance, lack of awareness in this whole area is deeply sinful. Do we find this sickness healed? Secondly the journey of faith must reach beyond the level of the psychic world and often concern for and the fascination with charisms shortcircuits the journey of faith. This, however, is a timely book for many Christian communities and pastors.

**Paddy MEAGHER**

## Book Notices

**His Love Is A Fire.** By Brother ROGER. Bombay: St Paul Publications, 1992. Pp. viii-89. Rs. 24-ISBN 81-7109-145-8.

This is an excellent small book of vibrant spirituality. Extracts have been made from the central writings and journals of the founder of Taizé. Something of the quality and basic theme of the spirituality can be found in these lines: "The more a believer wishes to live the absolute call of God, the more essential it

is to do so in the heart of human distress" (p.84). The original collection in French was made and published in Taizé (1988). There is great simplicity and profundity. We are introduced to the mystery of God's love, to prayer, to surrender, to commitment, to compassion and a sensitivity to the world of human suffering. If any lay person asked me for a good book for prayer and reflection which would guide them in daily life I would recom-

mend this one. The attitudes are deeply imbued with and authentically interpret the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Each extract is between one to two pages and would counteract the influence of value systems which are so pervasive and slowly and quietly destructive of a Christian vision of life. Excellent also for religious houses.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

**The Silence of Surrendering Love.** Body, Soul, Spirit Integration. By George A. MALONEY, S.J. Bombay: St Paul Publications, 1991. Pp. X-189. Rs.40. ISBN 81-7109-120-2

In the notes I counted 14 other titles by the author. Many of our readers know already his thoughts, his style and approach to the spiritual life. The theme around which this book is written is Silence—in the Trinity, of God in the OT, of Jesus, of Mary, of human love and the body. Maloney has a chapter on Silence to Hear the Cries of the Poor and an appendix with a suggested method of silencing the body, the psyche and the inner spirit reminiscent of Tony de Mello. Those who enjoy Maloney's approach to prayer and spirituality will be pleased to have this book at a reasonable price. When an author writes many books in a few years around the same subject area I always suspect that he recooks the same ingredients with some added spices.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

**Prayer to the Lord of Time.** By Frank TOPPING. Bombay: St Paul Publications, 1992. Pp. 71. Rs. 20. ISBN 81-7109-138-5.

Topping, a Methodist minister, broadcaster and writer, has written a number of books on prayer and spirituality. This book is built around the theme of time. This is a collection of prayers written in simple, direct and appealing language in open verse format. Here we find piety, not pious prayer. Interspersed with the prayers are black and white Indian photos. Though written and used on a Radio programme in England the thoughts are quite at home in India as they are simple human reflections and responses to God. Each prayer has a theme indicated by the title, e.g., Time for Laughter/for Caring/for Mystery/for a

Time to Pretend/ to see Christ/ to make Peace... I recommend this as the simple prayers touch depths and evoke simple and meaningful responses to God.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

**A Path to Prayer.** By Bishop Thomas MENAMPARAMPIL, SDB. Bombay: St Paul Publications, 1992. Pp. 111. Rs 20. ISBN 81-7109-153-9.

This book by the new Bishop of Guwahati is beautifully presented and printed. The author wishes to educate and help Christian to pray by reflecting on various attitudes to, aspects and types of prayer. The text is printed in short lines as if it were free verse as in a number of American publications on prayer, meditation and human growth. Books on prayer appeal to different people in different ways and we find here and there a thought, a suggestion, a reflection and some wise guidance which help us. Readers will find in these reflections nuggets of gold valuable for their lives.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

**Reflections of a Pilgrim.** By Fr. RAMVEER, IMS. Allahabad: St Paul Publications, 1990. Pp.166.

This book contains short, simple, pietistic reflections on many aspects of life in prose and poetry from a moralistic point of view. Examples, anecdotes and stories illustrate points being made and Scripture is used in a simple and traditional manner. Some readers will be helped.

**In Tranquil Solitary Grandeur** (Poetry and St John of the Cross)—Leaping Beyond to...("I don't—know—what)—San Juan de la Cruz Today Quezon City: Carmelite Monastery of St Therese. 1991/1991/1990. Pp. 146/110/91.

The first two books are edited by Susana Jose, a carmelite and the third is written by her as far as I can make out. The three books honour and inform us about St John of the Cross in different ways. There is a little bit of everything in them and the 1991 books are related to the Quadricentennial celebrations of John of the Cross in the Philippines.

**Church Humour.** Compiled by Judson K. CORNELIUS. Bombay: St Paul Publica-

151-2.

"Decent" clerical humour is often fairly shallow and not rated as good humour. This collection has some anecdotes, jokes, quotes which are commonplace and like worn tyres. However, paging through I stopped and chuckled and laughed as there are many good jokes and anecdotes collected here. The book comes from the USA and so the setting is often culturally alien. Before telling many of the jokes in India, they will need to be adapted to different settings, and different terms and language used. Useful to have about at home, in a Parish or religious house. The jokes will do no damage to even children. At times jokes or anecdotes can reveal gender, racial and social prejudices. The reader needs to notice this.

**You and Your Career** By Joe D. PEREIRA. Bombay: Better Yourself Books, 1992. Pp. 228. Rs.35. ISBN 81-7109-176-2.

This is the third revised edition of a 1982 book. The book covers most available careers with an evaluative description of the career, details about it and the education/training needed and facilities available for such training. Good for school counsellors and libraries

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**Pangs Of The Tender Palm.** By Dr Ram Dutt VASHISHTHA, and

**Tribute to the Prostitute.** By Sunil Solomon GHAZAN. Delhi: Navin Prakashan Kendra (ISPCK), 1992. Pp. 34./52. Rs. 4.75/5.50.

These booklets belong to the Development Education Series. The first is

about the employment of children. The author writes as if he was employed collecting coal, working in glass/fireworks/carpet factories or tea shops. The obvious injustices remind us of this blight on our national life.

Ghazan wants to prevent the growth, at least, of prostitution. The first part is a reminder of the human dignity and hidden qualities of women who are trapped into prostitution. The second part intends to prevent the growth of prostitution and warns parents and young girls. The first booklet is very well done, the second part of the second leaves me wondering. The proof-reading of the computer printout could be improved — letters dropped, words fused....  
**Donon Ek Tan.** By Fr. AMALADAS, Ranchi: Satya Bharati, 1992 (1988 — 2nd edition). Pp. xvi-215.

This is a reprint of the 2nd edition reviewed in VJTR 53(1989) 284.

**Ah! these Jesuits!** (Vol I. II. III) Anand: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1992. Pp. 92/57/69. Rs. 15/12/13.

These are the third revised edition of three books about Jesuit life written basically under the influence of Tony D'Mello. The sub-titles tell of the content: I. *Going My Way* — A vivid first person account of a boy receiving and answering God's call to the Jesuit life; II. *What Goes On Inside* — The inside story of how a young man becomes a Jesuit; III. *The Man In The Mask* — Next step: What happens after our young Jesuit's first vows. Useful books for vocational promotion and spreading knowledge of the Jesuit way of life.

**Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.**

# Vidyajyoti

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### The Vulnerability of Mission

David J. BOSCH

Continuing this year's reflection on the theme of mission this article states that the specific Christian character of mission is its "vulnerability" because in Christ God reveals his "weakness" rather than his power. Christians are called to be victim-missionaries rather than exemplar-missionaries. The paper was read at the twenty-fifth anniversary celebration of St Andrew's College, Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, in November 1991. The author kindly sent it for publication to the VIDYAJYOTI JOURNAL a few weeks before he died in a motor accident in South Africa at the age of 62. He was at the time head of the Department of Missiology at the University of South Africa (Unisa) in Pretoria and editor of the journal *Missionalia*. We review later in this issue his *magnum opus*, *Transforming Mission* (1991). This lecture may be considered Bosch's missiological testament. His focusing on the *kenosis* of Jesus as the heart of the mission echoes the stress of the Indian Theological Association in its 1989 declaration at the Tiruchirapalli meeting (see *Religious Pluralism*, ed. by K. Pathil, Delhi, ISPCK 1991, p. 396).

#### The Story of Fr Rodrigues

One of the most moving and at the same time disturbing novels of our time is *Silence*, by the Japanese author Shusaku Endo. It is based on the seventeenth century persecution of Christians in Japan. In 1549 Francis Xavier arrived in Japan and started a missionary venture that was astonishingly successful. Within thirty years there was a flourishing community of some 150,000 Christians, whose sterling qualities and deep faith inspired in the missionaries the vision of a totally Christian country (Johnston 1976:3). It was "the Christian century in Japan" (Boxer 1967). Towards the end of the sixteenth century, however, opposition began to set in,

culminating in the edict of expulsion of the missionaries in 1614. The purpose of the edict was the total eradication of Christianity from Japan. Some missionaries went underground, desperately trying to continue ministering to their Japanese converts. C.R. Boxer claims that the gruesome persecution that followed has been "unsurpassed in the long and painful history of martyrdom" both as regards the infamous brutality of methods used to exterminate the Christian and the heroic constancy of the sufferers (Boxer 1967:336f).

Those who were not executed were given the opportunity to apostatise. Often this took the form of placing the *fumie* before would be apostates — a bronze image of Christ mounted in a wooden frame. All that was expected of them was to trample on Christ's face, which would then be taken as proof of their having renounced the Christian faith.

Missionaries, too, were arrested and tortured, usually by being suspended upside down in a pit filled with excreta and other filth, which quickly proved to be the most effective means of inducing apostasy. Still, for sixteen years no missionary apostatised. And then the blow fell. In October 1633 Christovao Ferreira, the Portuguese Provincial and acknowledged leader of the Catholic mission in Japan, after six hours in the pit, gave the signal that he was ready to recant (Boxer 1967:353).

Endo's story is not about Ferreira, however, but about Sebastian Rodrigues, one of Ferreira's former students in Lisbon. With two colleagues he left for Japan to carry on the underground apostolate and also to atone for the apostasy of Ferreira which had so wounded the honour of the Church (Endo 1976:25).

Eventually Rodrigues, too, was captured and tortured. And much of Endo's novel deals with his ordeal and his refusal to renounce the faith. For many months he refused. All along he prayed fervently, prayed to God for guidance, for a clear direction to go. But there was only silence, as though God did not hear him, or was dead and did not exist. Then, one evening, the interpreter said confidently, "Tonight you will certainly apostatise." To Rodrigues this sounded like the words addressed to Peter: "Tonight, before the cock crows you will deny me thrice" (Endo 1976:261).

From where he lay, this fateful night, he could hear a ceaseless snoring, as of somebody sleeping in a drunken stupor. Late that night, as if to add insult to injury, the interpreter returned with Ferreira, who had meanwhile assumed a Japanese name. And it

was Ferreira who told him, "That's not snoring. That is the moaning of Christians hanging in the pit" (Endo 1976:263). Then Ferreira explained why he himself had apostatised. It was not because of being suspended in the pit, he said, but because "... I was put in here and heard the voices of those people for whom God did nothing. God did not do a single thing. I prayed with all my strength; but God did nothing" (265f). And now once again, with Fr Rodrigues in the same cell, God was doing nothing for those suspended in the pit. Then the official told Rodrigues, "If you apostatise, they will immediately be rescued." Rodrigues asked, "But why don't they apostatise?" And the official laughed as he answered, "They have already apostatised many times. But as long as you don't apostatise these peasants cannot be saved" (267). And, of course, all he had to do was to trample the *fumie*, already trampled by thousands of Japanese apostates. It was as simple as that! This was the devilishness of the scheme: while God remained silent he himself would save not only his own skin, but also the lives of many Japanese Christians!

It was this silence of God that has given Endo's novel its title — the silence of a God, a Christ, who did not respond to prayers or to torture. Still, in the end the silence was broken. Christ did speak to Rodrigues — not, however, the beautiful, haloed, and serene Christ of his devotions, but the Christ of the twisted and dented *fumie*, the Christ whose face had been distorted by many feet, the concave, ugly Christ, the trampled-upon and suffering Christ. And what this Christ was saying to the priest shocked him to the marrow, "Trample, trample! . . . It was to be trampled on by men that I was born into this world. It was to share men's pain that I carried my cross" (Endo 1976:271). And the novelist writes: "The priest placed his foot on the *fumie*. Dawn broke. And far in the distance the cock crew" (271).

### The Blood of the Martyrs

I shall return to the story of Fr Rodrigues, for certainly there is more here than meets the eye. For the moment, however, I wish to pursue another point. The growth of Christianity was severely impeded by the persecutions in Japan, but not extinguished. The Christians went into hiding until Japan was reopened in 1865, for more than two centuries clinging tenaciously to a faith that ruthless vigilance could not stamp out (Johnston 1975:11f). What happened, then, was another confirmation of the famous saying of Tertullian,

the second century North African theologian: "*Semen est sanguis Christianorum*" (freely translated: "the blood of the martyrs is seed of the Church"). What happened in Japan has happened in thousands of other places, throughout two millennia of Christian history. True Church growth, it would seem, takes place not where Christians call the shots, but where they suffer and perform the mission in weakness. A contemporary case in point is China. Even if China has, since 1989, again begun to wrap itself up in its own cocoon, we now know that a remarkable degree of growth has taken place in the Chinese church during the years of persecution and of the Cultural Revolution. In the wake of the Communist takeover in 1949 the work of *all* foreign missionaries was terminated. There was widespread despair over what was termed the missionary "debacle" in China (Paton 1952:50). Many believed that the events had spelled the end of Christianity in China. And yet today one has to ask whether China would have had as many Christians as it now has if the missionaries had stayed and been allowed to proceed with their work unhindered. The same story has frequently repeated itself elsewhere. Time and again the blood of the martyrs proved to be the seed of the Church (even if many of us might have grave reservations about the type of Christianity that has emerged in some of these places).

It has even been suggested that the twentieth century has witnessed more martyrs for the faith than all previous centuries combined (cf. Hefley 1988). One may think of the genocide of Armenian Christians in Turkey between 1895 and 1915. On one fateful day alone, 24 April 1915, an estimated six hundred thousand were slaughtered (Hefley 1988:318f). One may also think of those killed in Nazi Germany, in the Soviet Union, in Africa, in Latin America, and elsewhere. Not only *Christians* were the victims, however. We know of the six million Jews annihilated by Nazi Germany, of thousands of Buddhist monks killed in the eastern Soviet Union, and of hundreds of Muslims slain by Christian Phalangists in the Beirut refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila to mention only a few examples.

We may therefore never celebrate only our *own* martyrs. We are profoundly involved in all pain and tragedy occurring anywhere in the world. *Gaudium et Spes*, the Vatican II Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World, puts it as follows in its opening lines:

The joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the people of our time especially of those who are poor or afflicted in anyway, are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well.

## Whence Evil and Suffering?

There is thus, quite apart from suffering for the sake of one's faith, also the phenomenon of *general* suffering in the world and, more poignantly, the *suffering of the innocent*, the presence of *inexplicable* evil. This has led to the problem of *theodicy*, that is of justifying God in the face of evil, pain, and tragedy. As far back as the third century B.C. the Greek philosopher Epicurus formulated the problem in classical fashion (quoted in Lactantius, *Liber de ira Dei*, caput XIII):

God is either desirous of removing evil but incapable of doing so; or he is able to do it but unwilling; or he is neither willing nor able; or he is both willing and able. If he is willing to eliminate evil but not able to do it, he is weak — something unheard of in God. If he is able to do it but unwilling, he is malicious — also something foreign to God. If he is neither willing nor able to do away with evil, he is both malicious and weak and therefore not God. If he is both willing and able to remove evil — the only posture that befits God — *where then does evil come from? Or why does God not take it away?*

*Unde malum?* Whence evil and suffering? This is a problem with which all religions wrestle. The commonest — and easiest — response is to explain suffering as the just punishment of God or the gods (cf. Ratschow 1986:169-173). We find it in all religions, including Christianity and Judaism, also in the form of punishment being meted out even to the children of the guilty. According to John 9:2, Jesus' disciples, when faced with a man who had been born blind, asked: "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" And in our own time we often hear that people who contracted AIDS are simply getting their deserved punishment. Sometimes this view becomes a rigid dogma that sees a simple cause-effect relationship between transgression and retribution.

At other times, however, there is a shift away from this: the "solution" is then found in the conviction that the creature can never criticise or even explain what the Creator does. One then flees into the doctrine of inscrutability of God. God has the *right* to do as God pleases. Nobody has the "right" *not* to suffer. This belief can manifest itself either in the form of resignation or fatalism, as in Euripides, or in the form of acceptance and faith, as in Job (Ratschow 1986:171-173).

The latter view would find its consummation in Martin Luther. He distinguished between the *Deus absconditus* — the hidden, incomprehensible God — and the *Deus revelatus* — the revealed God,



whom we know in Jesus Christ. The Christian has to face both God's *opera aliena* — God's strange and inexplicable deeds — and God's *opera propria* — God's proper or salvific works.

Luther's *theologia crucis* (theology of the cross) thus attempts to give us some kind of handle on the theodicy question. I wish to use this as the basis for my reflection on theodicy but also for what I wish to say about mission in weakness.

First, however, I would like to ask whether it is perhaps not just a bit too neat to attribute the starvation of children in Ethiopia, the "killing fields" of Cambodia, the Holocaust, the occurrence of one natural disaster after the other in the Philippines, the misery caused by racial discrimination in all its many forms during the last few centuries, the tragic history of the Kurds, the plight of the civilian population of Vucovar and Ossijek, and similar atrocious occurrences simply to God's "strange works"? Have we "explained" these horrendous things once we have given them a label? I do not think so. Can we ever "explain" the shattered limbs and broken skulls of the innocent; can we ever, in our theologies, account for houses being reduced to rubble, forced removals, and emaciated children staring at cameras out of hollow eyes? There remains an unfathomable mystery here, and at the same time something so repugnant that we can never find peace with it, never supply it with a tag and file it away into our theological systems.

The Christian faith gives articulation to this mystery by saying that whenever the world suffers God is suffering too, *with* the world (cf. Ratschow 1986:176-179; Triebel 1988:8-15). The profoundest expression of this suffering-with, this *com-passion*, is God's *passion*, God's suffering-for. God is not an apathetic being. God is *pathetic*, in the original sense of the word, as one who suffers. Long after the terrible ordeal he had gone through, Fr Rodrigues was arguing bitterly with Christ, saying to him, "Lord, I resented your silence", to which Christ replied, "I was not silent. *I suffered beside you*" (Endo 1976:297; emphasis added.).

### A Divine Beauty Contest?

It is this dimension, more than any other, that distinguishes the Christian faith from other faiths. I do not say this by way of cheap comparison, with the aim of scoring points. Too often such inter religious comparisons are nothing but "divine beauty contests," as Koyama calls them. And, of course, in such contests one compares beauty with beauty, strength with strength. We shall not, however,

find the Christian gospel's distinctiveness along this road. Rather, its distinctiveness is to be looked for in its *weakness*, in its *inability* to prove itself or to force its way.

Another way of saying this, is to submit that Christianity is "unique" because of the *cross of Jesus Christ*. But then the cross must be seen for what it is: not as sign of strength, but as proof of weakness and vulnerability. The cross confronts us not with the power of God, but with God's weakness. A cross — symbol, above all, of shame and humiliation — cannot feature in a divine beauty contest: who would ever think of suggesting a cross as sign of beauty and strength?

And yet, this is precisely what Christians have often been tempted to do. We have done unimaginable things with the cross and in the name of the cross. Like Constantine and thousands of others since his time, we brandish it as a weapon, as a club, with which to clobber our own and God's enemies. Sometimes we try to hide it from the probing eyes of others, for a cross is such an embarrassment in public. At other times we wallow, masochistically, in the pain caused by the cross, since this makes us feel so much more virtuous; we even devise stratagems to make it heavier and more uncomfortable than it already is. Alternatively, we attempt to fit the cross with a handle, so as to make the carrying easier. We can then "whistle and light-footedly follow Jesus 'from victory to victory' . . . If necessary, we can even walk ahead of Jesus instead of 'follow him'" (Koyama 1976:2).

The gospel picture of the cross, and of a faith based on the cross, is, however, a very different one. Helpless, painracked in body and spirit, a victim of trumped-up charges, taunted by the bystanders, Jesus hung between two thieves. Listen to Luke's description of the crucifixion and the jeering (Luke 23:35-37,39):

The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at Jesus. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chose One." The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him vinegar and said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself" . . . One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!"

According to all the bystanders that day (including Jesus' disciples), Jesus would have saved himself if he truly was the king of the Jews or the Son of God. According to their unassailable logic a strong God would not have allowed his son to suffer the way Jesus did. And so, if Jesus does nothing about the matter, it can only

mean *one* thing: he is *unable* to do anything about it; so he is *not* the king of the Jews, *not* the Christ, *not* the Son of God. Nobody who can help it would have allowed things such as these to happen. What point is there in worshipping God, in claiming to be God's Son, if God renders no help in one's greatest need? Jesus "had not brought down rulers from their thrones they had brought *him* down instead; he had tried to lift the humble, but had been trampled by them in return; he had on occasion filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich empty away, but the rich now had their revenge" (Bonk 1991:120).

The logic behind all of this is indeed irrefutable. On Calvary Jesus failed the divine beauty contest, and he failed it miserably. After all, only the one who is victorious can claim to be divine. And we shall only follow such a lord, for in that way we too shall share in his victory and be successful and triumphant in everything we undertake.

This was, incidentally, also Satan's logic in the story of Job. In the very first chapter of the Book of Job (1:9-10), we hear Satan say to God:

Does Job fear God for nothing? Have you not put a fence around him and his house and all that he has, on every side?

This, then, is Satan's explanation for the phenomenon of religion. People serve God for what they get out of it. Religion pays dividends. This and this alone is the reason for Job's piety.

Satan's religious logic is not foreign to our own time, even to Christians. Only too often we find that Christianity is marketed in a "things-go-better-with-Jesus" wrapping, that preachers tell us that it pays to be a Christian. I once found the following words on the dust cover of a book by the popular American preacher, Dr Norman Vincent Peale:

Let Dr Peale give you ten simple, workable goals for developing confidence; three proven secrets for keeping up your vigor; thirteen actual examples of how prayer power helped people in need; four words that lead to success; five actual techniques used by successful men to overcome defeat; an eight-point spiritual healing formula; a ten-point guide to popularity.

In this paradigm Christianity wins the divine beauty contest *hands down*. And it is from within *this* perspective on religion, *this* definition of what the entire phenomenon of religion is all about, that Satan challenges God (Job 1:11),

... (just) stretch out your hand now, and touch all that (Job) has, and he will curse you to your face.

In other words: the moment religion ceases to pay dividends, it forfeits its very reason for existence. Religion is a matter of give and take: if I pay homage to God, I want something for my trouble in return, otherwise there's no point in it. Why serve God if he does not fulfill his part of the bargain?

### Christ's *kenosis* and the Christian Mission

The Gospel's reply to this is that, in the suffering Jesus, God embraces the suffering of the world for the sake of humanity (Ratschow 1986:179). Moreover, in Christ, God does not necessarily save us *from* suffering, but *in* and *through* it (Vicedom 1963:13). It also means, as Fr Rodrigues discovered, that Christ suffers when we suffer. The pain people suffer is the pain of Christ himself. Saul was not only — as he had thought — persecuting the *Church*, but Christ as well (cf. Acts 9:5). Christ identifies himself with his followers; what is done to them, is done to him also (Vicedom 1963:26). Paul even says, "... in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, the Church" (Col 1:24). He can say this only because Christ himself is suffering in him.

The cross is not accidental to the Christian faith. When the resurrected Jesus appeared to his disciples, his *scars* were proof of his identity; it was because of them that the disciples believed (Jn 20:20). Even so, it belonged to the essence of his life and ministry that he could not force his person and message upon people. Whatever he did was characterised by a complete inability to convince and dominate people by arguments based on the trappings of human culture. His ministry was a manifestation of the complete weakness and helplessness of unarmed truth (cf. Comblin 1977:81f). One New Testament term for this, made famous by Paul's Christological hymn in Philippians 2:5-11, is *kenosis*, "self-emptying" (cf. also Neely 1989). It is only in the way of giving up himself that Christ came to us. In his self-denial he came to us. In his dying for us he came to us (Koyama 1975:73). The broken Christ is the one who heals the broken world. The Japanese character for "sacrament," I am told, is a combination of the characters for "holiness" and "brokenness," "when holiness and brokenness come together for the sake of the salvation of others, we have Christian sacrament" (Koyama 1984:243).

This brings us back to the taunts hurled at Jesus on the cross: "He saved others, but he cannot save himself." For the onlookers this meant that he was not what he had claimed to be. And yet, this is precisely the point the Gospel is making: it is *false* gods who save themselves; the *true* God, however, saves others. It is in *not* saving himself that Christ reveals the fundamental character of the true God (cf. Koyama 1984:260).

It is at this point that the missionary significance of the cross emerges. I have said that when we suffer Christ suffers also. But the opposite is equally true: When Christ suffers we suffer. "If any want to become my followers" Jesus says (Mt 16:24), "let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." To those termed a chosen race and a holy people, designated to proclaim the mighty acts of God who had called them out of darkness into his marvelous light, the author of 1 Peter 2:21 directs the words, "For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps." And Hebrews 13:13 exhorts us: "Let us then go outside the camp and bear the abuse he endured." Similarly, when Ananias is sent to the penitent Saul in Damascus, he is given a message from Jesus for Saul, "I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name" (Acts 9:17). And years later Paul echoes these words when he says, "I carry the marks of Jesus branded on my body" (Gal 6:17).

The affliction missionaries endure is intimately bound up with their mission. William Frazier (1987:46) refers to the Roman Catholic ritual that usually crowns the sending ceremony of missionary communities, when the new missionaries are equipped with cross or crucifix:

Somewhere beneath the layers of meaning that have attached themselves to this practice from the days of Francis Xavier to our own is the simple truth enunciated by Justin and Tertullian: the way faithful Christians die is the most contagious aspect of what being a Christian means. The missionary cross or crucifix is no mere ornament depicting Christianity in general. Rather, it is a vigorous commentary on what gives the gospel its universal appeal. Those who receive it possesses not only a symbol of their mission but a handbook on how to carry it out.

"There is nothing attractive, easy, secure, comfortable, convenient, strategically efficient, economical, or self-fulfilling about taking up a cross" (Bonk 1991:18). And yet, says Dietrich Bonhoeffer in *The Cost of Discipleship* (1976:78),

To endure the cross is not a tragedy; it is the suffering which is the fruit of an exclusive allegiance to Jesus Christ. When it comes, it is not an accident, but a necessity . . . the cross is not the terrible end to an otherwise God-fearing and happy life, but it meets us at the beginning of our communion with Christ. When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die.

### Exemplar or Victim?

Let me now, on the basis of what has been said so far, reflect briefly on missionary communication. Looking at our theme from the perspective of a general theory of religious communication, we find that there are three fundamental and interlocking communicative ingredients in all religions: *myths*, *rites of passage*, and *sacrifice*. It is in the last of these that we may observe the most desperately urgent and dramatic attempt at communication, namely when destructive violence is unleashed on an innocent victim in sacrificial ritual (Verryn 1983, drawing on Rollo May and René Girard). In the area of missionary communication this has profound consequences, for the missionary can enter the communications process in but one of two possible roles — as a model or as a victim.

Not surprisingly, it is the former that has always been the more popular. But it also has devastating consequences. It almost inevitably creates a master-disciple relationship, with a general loss of freedom among the disciples who must perforce rely on their missionary-masters to lead them every step in the strange and new world they have chosen to enter. They cannot really cope, however, since they have to perform on the missionaries' terms (cf. Verryn 1983:23). The result is what Hendrik Kraemer (1947:426) once described as a relationship of "controlling benefactors to irritated recipients of charity." In a slightly different context, David Paton has portrayed the hearts of many Third World Christians as "the scene of a warfare between gratitude, politeness, and resentment" (Paton 1953:66).

The missionary can, however, also enter the communications process as *victim*. Victim-missionaries, in contrast to exemplar-missionaries, lead people to freedom and community (cf. Verryn 1983:23f). It seems to me that this is what the apostle Paul does, particularly as he comes across in 2 Corinthians (cf. Baum 1977; Bosch 1979; Prior 1988). No one has stressed the fragility and weakness of the missionary more than he does (Comblin 1977:80). He could have laid claim to the loyalty of the Corinthian Christians by virtue of his apostolic ministry, or the fact that he was the founder

of that church. However, he declines to do this. He is prepared to take the risk of being rejected. He creates enough room for them to say no to him. Throughout the letter, he struggles with two issues: the thorn in his own flesh, and the controversy with the "super-apostles" who are arguing that he is weak and inefficient in his ministry, whereas they are powerful and successful. And gradually, painfully, he develops "the courage to be weak" (cf. the title of Baum 1977). He accepts the thorn in his flesh. And he opposes the impressive arsenal of his opponents with very weak and simple weapons: patience, truth, love, weakness, service, modesty, and respect. Then, towards the end of his letter, he makes one of the most astounding claims ever made in religion: "Whenever I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor 12:10). He says this on the basis of his experience of Christ who has taught him: "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor 12:9).

It is this message he communicates to the Church in Corinth, a Church which is sorely tempted to follow the "high road" offered by the "super-apostles", the road of success and power and progress, the road of proving the validity of the Christian faith by conducting divine beauty contests. Paul, however, teaches them about the validity of paradox, about a God who, in spite of being all-powerful, became weak and vulnerable in his Son, about a Christ who, in spite of the fact that he could ask the Father to dispatch twelve million legions of angels to rescue him from the cross and destroy his crucifiers, stayed on the cross and prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

It is this life in paradox that gives Paul the courage to be weak and the power to continue his ministry. He expresses this in a moving litany (2 Cor 4:8-10):

We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed;  
perplexed, but not driven to despair,  
persecuted, but not forsaken,  
struck down, but not destroyed;  
always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus  
may also be made visible in our bodies.

Nowhere, however, has this life in paradox been portrayed more profoundly than in yet another litany (2 Cor 6:8-10):

We are treated as impostors, and yet are true;  
as unknown, and yet we are well known,  
as dying, and see, we are alive;

as punished, and yet not killed;  
 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing;  
 as poor, yet making many rich;  
 as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

Nils-Peter Moritzen (1966:30 - my translation) says,

Nobody denies that Jesus did much good, but that in no way saved him from being crucified . . . . It belongs to the essence of God's merciful movement to people that it needs the weak witness, the powerless ambassador of the message. Those who are to be won and saved should, as it were, always have the potential to crucify the witness of the gospel.

So Paul writes in his first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 4:9-13:

. . . . I think God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, as though sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to mortals. We are fools for the sake of Christ, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honour, but we in disrepute. To the present hour we are hungry and thirsty, we are poorly clothed and beaten and homeless, and we grow weary from the work of our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we speak kindly. We have become like the rubbish of the world, the dregs of all things, to this very day.

### The Ambience of Colonialism

The lines just quoted almost sound like a depiction of Fr Rodrigues's experiences. So let me return to him and attempt to put him within the context of what we have been exploring.

Perhaps you have been getting the impression that I tend to idealise the victim-missionary and to glamorize martyrdom. However, if we scrutinise the life and ministry of Fr Rodrigues (and, for that matter, the ministry of most missionaries) there is much in it that cause warning signals to flash. In order to identify these, it will be necessary to make some critical observations about the modern missionary enterprise from the West. I know that it is fashionable to do so in some circles today. The missionary has become an anti-hero, often looked upon as throw-back to a more primitive and bigoted era. Even in missionary circles the missionary enterprise is referred to as a "selfish war," aimed at little but the self-aggrandisement of Western religious institutions (cf. Heisig 1981:363-386). I do not wish to join in this chorus and I have no intention of indulging



in mission- and missionary-bashing. I wish to state unequivocally that I endorse the mission enterprise. I say this because I believe that the Christian faith (like Islam, for that matter) is intrinsically missionary, that the Church — as Vatican II put it — is “missionary by its very nature.” Christians (again, like Muslims) care what other people believe and how they live. It is impossible to expunge the universalistic dimension from the Christian faith; if you do that, you cripple it. It is truth not only for me, for us; it is, as Polanyi says, a commitment held “with universal intent” (quoted in Newbigin 1989:35). As the World Council of Churches document *Mission and Evangelism* puts it: “Christians owe the message of God’s salvation in Jesus Christ to every person and to every people” (para. 41).

Also, I do not wish to suggest that everything that went wrong in the so-called Third World and in Third World Christianity during the last four centuries or so is exclusively to be blamed on the West. Many Westerners, in their eagerness to exculpate the Third World, may not realise that this, too, may be an expression of paternalism: they do not even grant other people their own guilt but rob them of that as well.

Having said this, I have to go further and point out that much of what went wrong in Third World Christianity (to which I limit myself for the moment) undoubtedly had to do with the way in which the missionary enterprise from the West penetrated other cultures and religious hegemonies. Our scanty information about the Jesuit missionaries who went to Japan in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries does not tell us whether they entered the communication process as “exemplars” or as “victims.” Still, we know that their enterprise coincided with the beginning of the colonial expansion of the West and that, within the overall Christendom thinking of the era, it was *natural* for Western nations to argue that where their power went their religion had to go also. In the Catholicism of the time this found expression in the “royal patronage” (*patronato* in Spanish; *padroado* in Portuguese), a ruling of Pope Alexander VI who, in 1493 and 1494, for all practical purposes divided the non-Western world between the kings of Spain and Portugal, on the condition that they would Christianise the inhabitants of the countries they colonise. Where the Spanish and Portuguese colonisers went, Catholic missionaries went also.

It is this close liaison between mission and power that, during the World’s Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893, prompted Swami Vivekananda to tell the delegates what he heard people in

**India say about Christian missions (quoted in Neill 1970:6):**

All those that come over here from Christian lands to preach have that one antiquated foolishness of an argument that the Christians are powerful and rich and the Hindus are not, ergo Christianity is better than Hinduism, to which the Hindu very aptly retorts, that is why Hinduism is a religion and Christianity is not; because in this beastly world, it is Blackguardism and that alone that *prosper*s; virtue always suffers.

Still, it seems that, as long as the Japanese rulers were unaware of the intentions of the Europeans, the missionaries were welcomed and the Church expanded rapidly (cf. Boxer 1967). This was soon to change. Around 1597 the pilot of a stranded Spanish ship, in an effort to impress the Japanese, boasted that the greatness of the Spanish Empire was partly due to the missionaries who always prepared the way for the armed forces of the Spanish king. This was enough to infuriate the Japanese ruler Hideyoshi, who had formerly been on intimate terms with the Jesuits (Johnston 1976:5). The outlawing of Christian mission and the persecutions that would lead to the apostasy of Fr Rodrigues almost half a century later, can be traced back directly to this incident.

Again, we do not know how the missionaries viewed things and whether they indeed saw themselves as the vanguard of the colonisation of Japan by Spain or Portugal. But in the final analysis this made little difference. What David Paton said with reference to China just before the Communist takeover certainly also applied to the Japan of Fr Rodrigues's time (Paton 1953:23):

In a country which is being revolutionised by the invasion of the Western world, a Christian missionary who comes from the Western world, be he as harmless as a dove, as unpolitical as Jane Austen, is in himself by his very existence a political fact.

So, even if the missionaries themselves were innocent, they could not help but carry something of the atmosphere of Western colonialism with them, just as the smell of stale cigarettes clings to the clothes even of a non-smoker coming out of a room full of people smoking.

Thus, Rodrigues and his confreres were by implication colluding with the colonial powers. And in the Japan of the early seventeenth century this was suicidal. It is interesting though that, throughout the period of persecution, the Dutch continued to trade with Japan virtually without difficulty. But by this time the shrewd Dutch Calvinists, under the influence of the early stirrings of the Enlightenment, had already begun to distinguish between trade and colonisa-

tion on the one hand and Christianity on the other. In the hostile political climate of Japan they could therefore conveniently suspend the idea of getting involved in mission work — even if they did do mission work in the more “congenial” climates of Formosa (Taiwan), Ceylon (Sri Lanka), and the Cape of Good Hope.

### “Crusading Minds”

On the whole, however, the Dutch, and later the British and other Western colonial powers, were no different from the Spaniards and the Portuguese. Neither were their missionaries. The military terminology used during and after the 1910 Edinburgh World Missionary Conference betrays much of this. Expressions such as “soldiers”, “forces”, “strategy”, “crusade”, “campaign”, “tactical plans”, “marching orders”, and the like abounded. The conference was praised as “a council of war” and John Mott compared to military strategist. Mott himself lent credence to this when he concluded his final speech at the conference with the words: “The end of the conference is the beginning of the conquest . . .” (references in van ’t Hof 1972:28f). It is out the ambience of this culture that at least till recently we sang hymns like “Stand up, stand up for Jesus” and “Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war . . .”

In varying degrees, then — leaving aside, for the moment, the very important exceptions — missionaries from all these countries were guilty of paternalism. It is, of course, a simple fact that the activities of adherents of *any* religion which holds that it has a message of universal validity will invoke images of paternalism. And since the Christian faith, as I have suggested, is intrinsically missionary, it will often *be experienced* as paternalistic, even where it is not. This is, if you wish, simply an “occupational hazard” of Christian missionaries. The fact that these missionaries often *were* paternalistic, even condescending, and that the general world situation since the sixteenth century has helped to bring this about, is, however, an entirely different matter. Christianity, says Koyama (1974), exhibits a “crusading mind”, not a “crucified mind”; and it suffers from a “teacher complex” (Koyama 1975). In these circumstances it is easy for its missionaries to perceive themselves as “exemplars” rather than “victims”. Seventy years ago already Ronald Allen saw this with astounding clarity (Allen [1912] 1956:183f):

... we have preached the gospel from the point of view of the wealthy man who casts a mite into the lap of a beggar, rather than from the point of view of the husbandman who casts his seed into the earth,

knowing that his own life and the lives of all connected with him depend upon the crop which will result from his labour.

Allen, who was comparing Paul's missionary methods with ours, was actually suggesting the model of the "victim" missionary. So was D.T. Niles, one of the most remarkable Third World Christians of our time, who was wont to depict mission or evangelism as one beggar telling other beggars where to find bread. The point is that we are as dependent on the bread as those are to whom we go. And it is only as we share it with them that we experience its true taste and nutritious value.

There is yet another ingredient to the story of Fr Rodrigues. William Johnston, the translator of Shusaku Endo's novel, remarks in his preface, "If this Christianity had been less incorrigibly Western, things might have been different" (Johnston 1976:12). This is an important point. Latourette (1971:416-482; see especially 478-481) suggests that the Church has never successfully been planted in a previously alien culture unless there was also a profound and extensive communication between the Christian culture from which the missionaries came and the culture to which they went. Throughout the period Latourette surveyed in his multi-volume work on the history of the expansion of Christianity the Church remained "largely identified with the culture of Europe" (479). Koyama agrees, and suggests that this has been the case because of Western missionary Christianity's "crusading mind" and "teacher complex." This "one-way-traffic Christianity," as he calls it, has been an "ugly monster" (1975:73) and he adds (74), "I submit that a good hundred million American Dollars, 100 years of crusading with 100,000 'Billy Grahams' will not make Asia Christian."

## Suffering and Hope

From what we have surveyed and deduced from the story of Fr Rodrigues, we have to say, then, that not every persecution the Church suffers is persecution purely for the sake of the Gospel. Even our beautiful and moving stories about "Christian martyrs" contain elements that have little to do with dying for the sake of the Gospel.

Whether we have eyes to see it or not, the time of the exemplar-missionary is over — in fact, it should never have been. Fr Bernard Joinet, a French Roman Catholic missionary, tells the story of how he first went to Tanzania some twenty years ago (Joinet 1972). He

had been trained to "take over" the missionary enterprise the moment he arrived in Africa, he said. So he went with the idea that, metaphorically speaking, he would be the chauffeur of the missionary car. It took him some time to discover that what was needed was not a chauffeur, but a spare wheel. The chauffeur takes over the whole show and steers it in the direction he has chosen. The spare wheel's role, however, is merely complementary. It does not foist itself on the missionary "car".

Fr. Joinet had to make the painful discovery that he was not to enter the communications process as exemplar, but as victim. There are numerous other such victim-missionaries in our time. Was it not as such a victim-missionary that Terry Wait went to Beirut and was this not the role he played there during five years of captivity? I suggest that Desmond Tutu is another example of the victim-missionary. I remember 18 October 1977, the day when the South African government outlawed nineteen organisations, several of them explicitly Christian, arrested many of their leaders and served banning orders on other. That same afternoon the leadership of the South African Council of Churches held an emergency meeting to discuss the situation. Speaker after speaker took a strong stand on the need for a confrontational approach, the need for showing the state its muscle. Then Desmond Tutu remarked, "I fear that we have all been so seduced by the success ethic that we have forgotten that, in a very real sense, the Church was *meant* to be a *failing* community."

A Church that follows the model of the victim-missionary is one that is called to be a source of blessing to society, without being destined to regulate it (cf. Verry 1983:19). It knows that the Gospel ceases to be Gospel when it is foisted upon people. Such a Church will also take upon itself the sins of its own members and of its nation, as Toyohiko Kagawa did when his country had invaded China in the 1930s, as some German Church leaders did in the Stuttgart Declaration of 1945, and as the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa is beginning to do today, even if only haltingly and ambiguously.

Only if we turn our backs on false power and false security can there be authentic Christian mission. Of course, this will lead to opposition, perhaps even suffering, persecution and martyrdom. But martyrdom and persecution have always been among the lesser threats to the life and survival of the Church. Moreover, they will not have the last word. Just as the last word in Scripture is not the

cross but the resurrection and the triumph of God, so the last word for us is not suffering but *hope* — a hope, to be sure, that does not sever itself from suffering in and for the world, for that would cease to be *Christian* hope. True hope is hope-in-the-midst-of-adversity, and yet anchored in God's coming triumph over his rebellious world (Beker 1987:84). After all, we know and confess that God's final triumph is already casting its rays into our present world — however opaque these rays may be and however much they may be contradicted by the empirical reality of adversity and suffering (Beker 1982:58). Caught, for the time being, in this inescapable tension, oscillating between agony and joy, we nevertheless trust that God's victory is certain. And on this we wager our mission and our future.

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# Conversion and Confrontation

## The Talasari Mission Experience

Rudolf C. HEREDIA, S.J.

The author, now on the staff of the Indian Social Institute (Lodi Road, New Delhi 110003), makes a sociological study of the evolution of the Talasari mission in Maharashtra in the last seventy years. He analyses the forces at work in the passage from a religious/proselytising concern to involvement in development projects and finally to promotion of conscientization among the people in search of justice, and shows how the three are interconnected. The early section of the study, dealing with the situation of the Warlis and the history of the mission is omitted and presented in summarised form by the editors of VJTR.

**R**eligious communalism and fundamentalism have more recently escalated the issue of tribal conversions into a national one, just as the greater awareness among the tribals of their own identity and the injustices they are subjected to has precipitated many local movements for change at the grass-roots. Though religious conversion is no longer as urgent an objective as it used to be at the Talasari mission, other more secular movements for change among the tribals have certainly gathered momentum and have often resulted in 'violent' conflicts.

How did the inspiration of the first missionaries who set out to convert the tribals in the area change over the years? What kind of opposition did it provoke and why? How did this change as the mission developed? In attempting to answer such questions we expect to arrive at a better understanding of the role of the mission in "the service of the faith and the promotion of justice" among these people.

### *(Summary of the historical part)*

The so-called Talasari mission in the Thane Dt of Maharashtra serves an area largely inhabited by tribals, mostly Warlis, who had been exploited for centuries. Symington's *Report* of 1938 calls the situation "a blot on the



administration." A series of movements of protest and rebellion were organised at least from the end of the 19th century.

The mission was started there in 1922 by members of the Missionary Society of St Francis of Assisi. They began by organising public meetings and talking about the Christian faith as an assurance against the feared *bhuts* or evil spirits. The missionaries were non-ordained brothers, themselves served by chaplains from the diocesan clergy. The Sisters of St Francis Xavier soon joined the mission. In 1937 the Jesuits were sent there by the Archbishop of Bombay and soon took over responsibility for the mission. They were slower at baptising than their predecessors and insisted on consolidation and faith instruction. Education was seen as the best chance to empower the Warlis against their dependence on landlords and moneylenders. Multipurpose cooperative societies were established from 1951. Health and medical work was done mostly by the Xaverian Sisters and later by the Canossian Sisters who came to help them, with special stress on the problem of leprosy prevalent in the area.

Experience of the needs of the Warlis lead from 1958 to organising schemes of socio-economic benefits, like intense rice cultivation, use of fertilisers, food for work, etc. The work was secular, the inspiration religious. The legitimacy of the secular involvement, disputed at first, seemed to be established by Vatican II. But in the last two decades a new element came in from liberation theology. Now conscientization for demanding social justice from below became the primary target, non-formal education one of its means, although the school network was never given up.

## Issues and Concerns

The issue of conversion is a sensitive one and difficult to handle to the satisfaction of all. Here it is presented from the perspective of an 'insider', which cannot but give it an orientation that not all may be comfortable with. Hence to correct this bias to the extent possible an attempt will be made to present in like manner the concerns of the local opposition to the mission, if not empathetically then at least as fairly as we can. We hope this procedure will be more acceptable than a mere disclaimer of any prejudice.

### 1. The Issue of Conversion

The discussion of the issue of conversion here will not entail a theological analysis of this issue. Without negating the importance of such an approach, especially in this time of dialogue and religious pluralism, our attempt is rather to reflect on the social significance and meaning of such religious phenomena. This is indeed a necessary step for theological discussion, which becomes meaningful only in the social context in which much religious phenomena

become intelligible and significant.

The "tent touring" of the Franciscan brothers is an example of what has come to be called "the direct proclamation of the gospel." This has been a time honoured strategy of missionaries from the time of St Paul ("Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel," 1 Cor 9:16) to the days of St Francis Xavier and after. Indeed this "tent touring" surely has some parallel with the missionary activity of Xavier, who would recite the "Credo" or preach a sermon that he had learned by heart in a language he did not comprehend, and then baptize thousands of 'pagans' before moving on to newer pastures. Now if our judgement of Xavier must be in the historical context of his time, then our discussion of "tent-touring" must be contextualized in ours.

It is rather presumptuous to conclude that such conversions are the result of a mass realization of the 'truth' of the new religion as opposed to the inadequacies of the old one, or that material inducements and clever persuasion have led such people to change their religious allegiance *en masse*. Such presumptions seem to derive less from historical fact than from the ethnocentric perspective and paternalist prejudice of the outsider, who has too much regard for his own religion and/or too little for the integrity of other peoples. A realistic appreciation of tribal society and culture would demand a less facile explanation.

The religious conversion of a group represents a change in social allegiance that is more than just religious. It is the function which the new allegiance fulfils, and the new social context which it creates, wherein the significance and meaning of this change must be sought in any sociological reflection.<sup>1</sup>

From the historical context of the Warlis it is apparent that the tribal situation at the time of their conversion was one of oppression, both religious and social. Their animistic faith was not a bed-rock of assurance against the fears and anxieties that seemed to crowd in on them with the political, economic and social changes that left them increasingly more and more oppressed and defenceless. Yet a change of religious allegiance meant cultural and tribal isolation. This made individual conversion socially rather costly and difficult. Group conversion provided more security. While it is true that the earliest converts were somewhat scattered, marginalized persons, eventually those who persevered were more likely to

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1. Cf. Augustine KANJAMALA, *Religion and Modernization of India*, Pune: Ishvani, 1981, esp. Ch.2, "Mass Conversion to Christianity and Social Changes before 1949," pp. 55ff.

have been helped by the support of a family and even of a larger group of families in the village or at least in its hamlets.

The earliest efforts of the brothers at evangelization addressed themselves to the condition of spiritual distress the tribals seemed to experience in their changing world. But their endeavour was never confined to religion alone. From the very beginning the mission did make efforts to buffer the social isolation of conversion and lessen tribal dependence on landlords, moneylenders and other exploiters. They supported the neophytes as best they could by building small communities of them, providing some measure of charitable relief for the needy, and especially education for the tribals who wanted it.

From its early endeavours the mission's social involvement progressively increased, as it consolidated the school system, expanded into development work, and eventually into non-formal education and conscientization. The tribal response to these efforts can hardly be explained by force or fraud. Some genuine need, some deep aspiration of these people, must have been touched for them to choose an allegiance to the mission in spite of the opposition they had to brave.

When social change adversely affects a people and they find no adequate ways of coping with their insecurities from within their prevailing religion and culture, then religious renewal or conversion can easily be precipitated. In the oppressive situation of the Warlis at the time, the brothers' preaching must have represented such a spiritual liberation from their fear of evil-spirits and a new assurance against their anxieties in their fast deteriorating situation. Obviously the social involvement of the mission in their lives had something to do with this change in their religious allegiance. But to dismiss the importance of the religious factor and its significance for these tribals is to discount their religious sensibilities because of our own secular prejudices.

Certainly the religious promise and hope the missionaries brought these tribals was rendered more credible by their endeavour to uplift them socially. For the religious does not exist in isolation from the human, either in the individual or in society.

Over the years we have seen how the understanding of the missionary endeavour did change in the direction of a broader commitment to social development and human liberation, though the religious inspiration is not lost. If then the early conversions among

these people were from an experience of spiritual and religious liberation, their perseverance in the face of persecution and violence becomes intelligible only when it is seen in the light of a larger experience, a wider and more integrated liberation in their struggle for justice, and not just in that of the faith.

## *2. The Opposition from Vested Interests*

If we have rejected the facile explanations of tribal conversions which seem to derive from ethnocentric or paternalistic assumptions, then here too we must not be naive with the mission's opponents. To discuss the opposition to the mission in terms of demonic forces and evil inspirations or the inevitable burden of the cross may go better with some theological perspectives than with others. But we are engaged in a sociological reflection, not a theological controversy. Hence our attempt will be to contextualize the concerns of the mission's opponents in terms of the social situation from which they derive. For even apparently accidental events and individual motivations ought to be seen in this context. Only then is it possible to discern the structure into which they fall, and make an analysis at the level of social significance and meaning, as we did earlier for the issue of conversion.

How one comes across to one's opponents must surely be included somehow in one's self-understanding. For their perception can often come from an entirely different perspective, and as such can provide some interesting and revealing insights, once a proper context has been set. It would be unfortunate to discount them as merely subjective and prejudiced, and to miss the opportunity of seeing oneself through the eyes of one's opponents, for whatever it is worth, which sometimes does amount to rather much. Hopefully we will not make this mistake.

Although the brothers first pitched their tent near Bhilad railway station in November 1921, it was only in 1926 that they were able to secure land at Zaroli nearby. For, roused by a visiting brahmin priest, the landlords began a campaign of protest to the government to keep the brothers out of the area. This opposition seems to have increased even though it never quite succeeded in stopping the progress of the mission.

Frequently the opposition was expressed in a landlord expelling his Christian Warli tenants, who were not much more than bonded labourers. So it fell to the mission to rehabilitate them on land it acquired on their behalf. Thus in 1939 the Christians of Thakur-

pada, a village near Dapcharti, were expelled by their landlord for refusing to give up their faith and were resettled by the mission at Varkhanda. Eventually the land legislation enacted after Independence did provide some means of legal redress, however inadequate.

At times the opposition was more organized and planned. In 1936 Brother Sales, a Franciscan, converted to Hinduism, assumed the name of Narayan Sharma, and with the active support of the landlords and moneylenders (*saukars*), mounted a vigorous campaign against the mission trying to wean people away from it. On occasion the confrontation took a violent turn, as when on the 13th of November 1939, Narayan Sharma called a large public meeting at Numberpada near Nagzari and the mission mobilized Christians to oppose it.

In the end the faithful persistence of the missionaries in following their flock led to the diminishing of Sharma's impact. By 1943 his influence seems to have waned if we go by the people's response to the meetings he called. By 1947 he moved out of the mission area to the coast. He was finally reconciled to the Church in 1954, and his brahmin wife received into the faith in 1955.

Obviously there were religious, political and economic concerns involved in this opposition. For the Hindu priests and tribal shamans (*bhagats*), the new faith represented a religious and cultural challenge they could not take lightly. Hence their attempts to isolate and ostracize the neophytes. However, the converts' response, encouraged by their priests, was to preserve as much of their tribal culture and religion as was compatible with their new faith. Becoming Christian was not to alienate themselves from being Warlis. They would authentically be both. This approach served to buffer the change of conversion for both sides. Later it was developed into a full-fledged policy of 'inculturation'.

Interestingly it is only more recently, and rather as a response to tribal conversions to Christianity, that Hindus have claimed them as their own. Earlier their animistic religion was not regarded as part of the 'sanatana dharma', and certainly tribal gods were not part of the Hindu pantheon, though tribals had adopted some of its deities. Today this claim that primitive tribal religion is part of Hinduism seems to be more politically inspired than historically or sociologically founded.

Moreover, much of the opposition to the mission came from Muslim and especially Parsi landlords, who could have little reli-

gious concern over conversions that did not directly affect their religious community. It seems then that underlying the expressed religious concerns of the mission's opponents were political and economic ones. These could only come from perceiving the mission as a threat to their interests in this area, which must lead us to conclude that the mission brought more than spiritual or religious liberation (*moksha*) to these tribals. Its involvement in social welfare and development, in education and conscientization, was rightly perceived as a threat to the social structure that had served the vested interests in the area so well. Surely this was a threat even less acceptable than the religious challenge the mission posed.

### 3. *The Conflict with the Communists*

If the mission was seen as an instrument of change on behalf of the oppressed by the established interests, then it becomes problematic indeed to explain the confrontation with a political party struggling for the same goal. The Adivasi revolt led by the Communist party in the area provoked a harsh response from the states,<sup>2</sup> and the mission by and large seems to have sided with the state against the communists. These in turn seem to have perceived the mission as supporting the status quo and opposing genuine structural change.

At first sight a conflict between an atheistic political party and a property-conscious Church might well seem inevitable. However, we cannot but be skeptical as to how atheistic these tribal communists were though their party leaders may well have been. The hostility of these two protagonists is not easily explained in terms of the local situation alone, but must be seen in a larger context.

This was the time of the cold war on the international scene, when the Catholic Church and the Communist Party were implacable enemies. The Catholic Church in India clearly took its cue from the Roman Church just as the Communist Party in India did from the international communist movement. Thus in 1937, Pius XI in his encyclical "On Atheistic Communism" condemned communism as "intrinsically perverse" and forbade Christians to "collaborate with it in any undertaking whatsoever." A decree of the Holy Office in 1949, which was reiterated again in 1959, excommunicated Catholics who collaborated with the Communist Party. And this could hardly have remained as a one-sided antagonism.

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2. Cf. Godavari PARULEKAR, *Adivasi Revolt*, Calcutta: National Book Agency, 1975, Ch.10, pp. 116ff.

On the national scene, the Congress Party in power was firmly opposed to the Communist Party and its ideology. The Indian Church, with its sensitivity to its minority status, took the safer option of siding with the state. The Communist Party, with its revolutionary pretensions, took the option against the government.

Moreover, the preoccupation of the Indian Church with the communist threat is well reflected in the *Reports of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India* (CBCI). In 1946 the entire report dealt with communism, claiming that "the gravest danger to faith and right social order is present day communism . . . . Extensive rioting and lawlessness in big cities can be traced to communist activities."<sup>3</sup> And as late as 1960, the bishops wanted to "protect the people in general and Catholics in particular, against the virus of communist ideology."<sup>4</sup> And once again, on the international as well as on the national level, the Communist Party was not about to respond to such a stance by turning the other cheek.

It seems then that it was really the religious-political conflict on the international scene, and the political-economic one in the nation, that oriented and triggered the confrontation between the local church and local party in the mission area. Today the context has changed. Internationally the religious cold war between Catholics and Marxists has thawed. The two sides have become more appreciative of each other since liberation theology made its appearance. Nationally too, there has been change. The communist parties have entered parliamentary politics, and the Church is more willing to oppose the government on issues of justice. Such changes have slowly begun to filter down to the local level at Talasari, where the hostility is less overt, though the suspicions remain.

Eventually both the protagonists settled down to a working arrangement. The mission withdrew its overt opposition to the communist vote, and the party refrained from actively harassing the Christians in the villages. The tribals still vote communist in the area, and the Christians still practise and preach their faith. Such co-existence makes for a precarious peace, which easily breaks down whenever the mission has attempted anything that may threaten the party's political base, which it jealously guards.

In 1978 the Kashtakari Sanghatana was launched as a movement to fight for the rights of the toiling masses, under the guidance of

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3. Cited by John DESROCHERS, Bangalore: the author, 1982, p. 408, from the CBCI Report, 1946, pp. 57 and 59.

4. *Ibid.* from the CBCI Report, 1960, p. 40.

two Jesuit priests who were inspired by liberation theology. Many educated tribal youth, mostly Christian, participated. This was seen by the Party to be a direct threat to its political dominance in the area and there followed a series of violent attacks on mission property and personnel, on Christian villages and sympathizers. Of the two priests, one left, the other was expelled from the Order by 1982, and only when the mission completely dissociated itself from the movement was there some reprieve from violence.

The Kashtakari Sanghatana has evolved into a Marxist-Leninist inspired movement, and is actively involved in the political struggle of the area. However the hostility between the two Marxist-inspired protagonists is unabated and often spills over into violence. This situation is hardly to the best advantage of the tribals but it is not uncommon with grass-roots movements of the left.

### Conclusion

The questions pertinent to conversion and confrontation are not peculiar to Talasari. The dynamics of the issues involved are more general, and this makes them relevant to a wider discussion.

The shift in the mission's focus from a narrow religious approach to a broader social involvement and eventually to a political concern is not an exceptional case. Two complementary processes are at work here. From the outside, the experiences of the interrelatedness of the religious and the social, and the response this calls for, and on the inside, a reflection on this experience, questioning the old and inspiring a new vision for mission work.

The confrontation that the mission met with is very much a part of the mission's experience, just as the perceptions of its opponents are also very revealing. The extra-religious involvement of the mission in the lives of the people to liberate them is indeed authenticated by this opposition of the landlords and moneylenders, especially when religious conversion was not an issue for the non-Hindus among these (Parsis or Muslims): why were they so opposed to the mission!

It was the same vested interests that had earlier opposed the Devi cult that had swept through this area in 1922.<sup>5</sup> It was a religious movement which advocated vegetarianism and ritual cleanliness, banned liquor and boycotted the Parsis. Thus it was both an "act of assertion against the most rapacious of the local exploiters,

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5. David HARDIMAN, *The Coming of the Devi — Adivasi Assertion in Western*



the Parsis," and an attempt "to appropriate (and thus democratize and implicitly change) the values associated with the regionally dominant high caste Hindus (and Jains).<sup>6</sup> Eventually the movement was suppressed by the British when it took on a nationalist turn. But the centrality of religious symbolism to the movement and the challenge it posed to the tribal exploiters are crucial to our understanding of the tribals' conversion to Christianity and its implication for the local vested interests, as part of the saga of the mission.

The conflict with the Communist Party seems to have ideological overtones, a religious ideology for the mission and a political one for the Party. These seem to derive from the international affiliations of both, the Roman Church for the mission and the international communist movement for the Party. At the national level too, the opposition between the government and the Communist Party disinclined a Church conscious of its minority status from supporting any radical opposition to the government or the *status quo*.

The conflict then between the Christians and the communists seems to have been precipitated less by the local situation itself than by factors extraneous to it. Only when the Church posed a threat to the political vote of the Party did they retaliate. Otherwise a co-existence seems to have been worked out. More recently, with the mission's connection with the initial stages of the Kashtakari movement, there were violent reprisals by the Party. However, now that the mission has distanced itself from the movement the *status quo ante* prevails. This of course is not an appraisal of the role of any of the parties to this conflict, it is only a comment on the relationship between two of the protagonists.

The mission to the Warlis in Talasari represents a small missionary endeavor in the Church's history. But its evolution does have parallels elsewhere in the country. Though we cannot develop them here we will do well to at least indicate one of them, so the broader implication of our conclusions for Talasari are not lost.

The Ranchi mission to the tribals in Chotanagpur, begun in the 19th century, has been a model for Talasari. Here too the initial efforts at evangelization soon included a social involvement, as epitomized by the struggle of Constance Lievens on behalf of the tribals against their oppressors. There have been tribal movements, from Birsa Munda in 1895 onwards, that revolted against this oppression,<sup>7</sup> but the local church was not in confrontation with them. These

6. *Ibid.*, p. 164.

7. For a detailed account of the Birsa Munda movement, see B. K. Chakravarty, *Birsa Munda and His Movement* (Calcutta, 1964).

movements were by tribal leaders, not communist outsiders. The local situation did not warrant any conflict and extraneous factors did not intervene. The Jharkhand movement today with its demand for a separate tribal state represents a coalescence of earlier movements against the 'dikhu', the outsider. But Christians were not considered so. In fact they are largely supportive of the movement.'

The parallel between Talasari and Chotanagpur should not be overplayed, but it can be instructive in understanding the saga of the Talasari mission. To see this saga as the secularization of the mission is to miss the really critical issue: the quest of the mission to liberate the people, a quest as old as the Exodus and enlivened today with the inspiration of liberation theology. It is beyond the scope of this paper to trace the development of the theology implied in this quest, and how the 'liberationist' elements have been articulated at various times. This has been documented and made explicit in numerous theological studies now available. Here we have tried to underline the social processes which have moved the mission in this direction, processes which do in fact embrace the religious and the social, including the political and economic dimensions as well.

At one level, the service of the faith and the promotion of justice must be explicitly integrated in an apostolic endeavour; There is a tension between them that must be transcended. And yet at another level, the very interrelatedness of the realities encountered in the field demands a correspondingly integrated approach, which any genuine involvement must meet or become marginal to the real needs of the situation. At Talasari both these levels were operative, at times perhaps one more than the other, though the general trend of the shift has been from the implicit to the explicit articulation of the liberation perspective operative here.

And so, it is only in such a total context of the interrelatedness of these aspects, and their connectedness to the situation beyond the local one, that the true saga of the Talasari mission can be told. It is a tale not without its share of lost opportunities and unintended consequences, but certainly also one of dedication and perseverance, of quiet heroism and selfless sacrifice. This is perhaps best brought out by the fact that the Mother General of the Xaverian Sisters died of the leprosy can treated through her constant care of her patients. But this is not the end of the story. We feel sure the saga of the Talasari mission will continue and be retold many times.

## Vocation from the Syro-Malabar Church to Religious Institutes of the Latin Church

Joseph THAYIL, S.J.

This article is the outcome of a study by Jesuit Fathers Paul Lenthaparambil, Sebastian Painadath and the author regarding the demands of Church Law in respect to the decision of a candidate from one rite to enter monastic or religious life in another rite, the pastoral reasons for these rules and the principles that should govern the authorities in granting or refusing the necessary permissions. It reminds us that a requirement of permission does not mean prohibition. The author's address is Sameeksha, Centre of Indian Spirituality, Kalady 683574, Kerala.

**I**n the Code of Canons of Eastern Churches (CCEO), which has become law on October 1, 1991 there are two canons which deal with the admission of candidates of one Church *sui juris*<sup>1</sup> to the novitiate of a monastery or religious institute of another Church *sui juris*. Canon 451 prescribes: "No one can be licitly admitted to the novitiate of a monastery of another Church *sui juris* without the permission of the Apostolic See, unless it is the case of a candidate who is destined for a dependent monastery of his own Church as mentioned in c. 432." Similarly, canon 517/2 states: "No one can be licitly admitted to the novitiate of a religious institute of another Church *sui juris* without the permission of the Apostolic See, unless it is the case of a candidate destined for a province or house of his own Church as mentioned in c. 432." Both these canons refer to c. 432 which regulates that "a dependent monastery or a house or province of a religious institute of any Church *sui juris* whatever, including the Latin Church, which is ascribed to another Church *sui juris* with the consent of the Apostolic See, must observe the law of

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1. Canonists seem to prefer the Latin term 'sui juris'. Autonomous may be an equivalent term.

this Church . . . ." The entering into force of CCEO with these canons has caused some apprehension and anxiety in the members of religious institutes of the Latin Church which depend heavily on vocations from the Syro-Malabar Church.

### False assumptions

Such apprehension and anxiety are possibly caused by two false assumptions. The first of these is that CCEO is an entirely new legislation. The fact of the matter is that parts of the Oriental Code have been promulgated in four stages, in 1949, 1950, 1952 and 1957, all during the pontificate of Pope Pius XII. The section on Religious in which the canons cited above appear was promulgated by the *motu proprio* "Postquam Apostolicis Litteris" of February 9, 1952.<sup>2</sup> What is new is that the complete Code applicable to *all* the Eastern Churches has been completed only in 1990 and that the *whole* Oriental Code has become law on October 1, 1991. Such being the case, the promulgation of the Oriental Code is a historic event,<sup>3</sup> and consequently has attracted much more attention than the partial promulgation of earlier times. It is also good to remember in this context that up until 1949 Orientals desirous to enter a religious institute of the Latin Church were obliged to change their rite and adopt the Latin rite. Since 1949 Orientals did not, nay could not, change their rite but were permitted to use the Latin rite in their life and ministry.

The second false assumption is that when permission is required for an Oriental to enter a religious institute of the Latin Church it is tantamount to forbidding it or at least discouraging it. If I am required to get permission from my religious superior to buy a watch it does not mean that I am forbidden, much less discouraged, to use a watch! Requiring a driver's license — which is a permission to drive a vehicle — does not imply that driving is forbidden or discouraged. What is forbidden is driving without a license, not driving. A permission is a 'modus agendi', a way of acting in order to ensure necessary order and harmony; it does not imply a prohibition. Unfortunately, not a few seem to interpret these canons as a prohibition or, at least, reason to dissuade Syro-Malabar candidates to religious institutes of the Latin Church.

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2. Cf. George NEDUNGATT, S.J., "A New Code for the Oriental Churches," *VJTR* 55(1991) 267.

3. See the Holy Father's presentation address to the Synod of Bishops, October 25, 1990, published in the English edition of *L'Osservatore Romano*, 5 November 1990.

## Understanding cc. 451 and 517/2

In order to correctly understand these canons some background information seems necessary. The Code of Canon Law (CIC) of the Latin Church promulgated in 1983 is the 1917 code revised and updated in accordance with the call for renewal of Vatican II. The Code of Canons of Eastern Churches promulgated in 1990 and become law in 1991 is the culmination of a work begun in 1929, also revised and updated according to the spirit of Vatican II. In "Sacri canones," the document promulgating CCEO, the Pope described it as "the crowning piece of the magisterium of the Second Vatican Council." He also added that CCEO "is part of one single corpus of Canon Law" consisting of CIC, the Apostolic Constitution "Pastor Bonus" on the reform of the Roman Curia promulgated in 1988 and finally CCEO. This means that the understanding of any canon of any Code will have to be in the light of the decrees of Vatican II, in accordance with its spirit and not opposed to it, as well as in the light of the "single corpus of Canon Law."

## Vatican II on Eastern Churches

The decree of Vatican II on Eastern Church — *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* — after stating that "it is the mind of the Catholic Church that each individual Church or rite retain its traditions whole and entire, while adjusting its way of life to the various needs of time and place" (OE 2), adds: "Individual Churches whether of the East or of the West, although they differ somewhat among themselves in what are called rites (that is, in liturgy, ecclesiastical discipline and spiritual heritage) . . . are consequently of equal dignity, so that none of them is superior to the others by reason of rite. They enjoy the same rights and obligations even with respect of preaching the Gospel to the whole world under the guidance of the Roman Pontiff" (OE 3) . . . "Therefore attention should everywhere be given to the preservation and growth of each individual Church . . . Finally each and every Catholic, as also the baptized member of every non-Catholic Church or community who enters into the fullness of Catholic communion, should everywhere retain his proper rite, cherish it, and observe it to the best of his ability" (OE 4).

Having decreed that each one should retain his proper rite and cherish it, the Council makes the following recommendation to Religious: "Religious Societies and associations of the Latin rite working in Eastern countries or among Eastern faithful are earnestly

counselled to establish houses or even provinces of Eastern rite for the sake of greater apostolic efficacy, as far as this can be done" (OE 6).

The Council had good reasons to give this directive to religious institutes of the Latin Church working among Eastern faithful because in the past these institutes seldom showed concern to study and understand the liturgy and traditions of these people but rather tended to latinize them.

### Vatican II and the Codes on the freedom of the individual

In its declaration on Religious Freedom — *Dignitatis Humanae* — the Second Vatican Council observes that " . . . this freedom means that all men are to be *immune from coercion*<sup>4</sup> on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power, in such wise that in matters religious no one is to be *forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs*" (DH 2) and that "the right to religious freedom has its foundation in the very dignity of the human person" (DH 2). It is this thought of Vatican II that both CCEO and CIC have declared in identical words: "All Christ's faithful have the right to *be immune from any coercion whatever* in the choice of a state of life" (CCEO c.22; CIC c.219).

### Vatican II and the Codes on the mission of the Church and on missionary vocations

In its decree on the Church's Missionary Activity — *Ad Gentes* — Vatican II envisages the function of the bishops in the following terms: "As members of the body of bishops which succeeds the College of the Apostles, all bishops are consecrated not just for some diocese, but for the salvation of the entire world" (AG 38). And in the decree on the Bishops' Pastoral Office in the Church — *Christus Dominus* — the Council says that the "Bishops . . . should show concern for all the churches" (CD 6) and that "they should foster priestly and religious vocations as much as possible, and take special interest in missionary vocations" (CD 15). In the decree on Priestly Formation — *Optatum Totius* — the Council prescribes: "Efforts on behalf of vocations should be large-hearted enough to *transcend the boundaries of each diocese, nation, religious community and rite*" (OT 2).

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4. Emphasis on parts of texts quoted in the article is the author's.

On the matter of fostering vocations, the Latin Code has, among others, the following prescriptions: "It is the duty of the whole Christian community to foster vocations so that the *needs of the sacred ministry are sufficiently met in the entire Church*" (CIC c.233/1). "The diocesan bishop must in a very special way foster vocations to the various ministries and to consecrated life, having a special care for priestly and *missionary vocations*" (CIC c.385). "Mindful that he is bound to give an example of holiness, charity, humility and simplicity of life, the diocesan bishop is to seek in every way to promote the holiness of Christ's faithful *according to the special vocation of each*" (CIC c.387). This great concern of the Council and the Latin Code for the needs of the universal Church, CCEO has beautifully recapitulated in its canon 329/2: "Particular laws of every Church should make provision for the work of promoting vocations both on the regional and as far as possible on the eparchial level, *remaining open to the needs of the universal Church and especially of the missions.*"

## Conclusions

From what has been collated above from the Council documents and the two Codes, the following conclusions can be drawn.

1. The Council obliges each person to retain and cherish his/her rite, liturgical tradition and spiritual heritage.
2. A conciliar obligation like this can be dispensed with only by the authority of the Apostolic See. Hence CCEO legislates that the permission of the Apostolic See is required for a member of an Eastern Church to enter a religious institute of the Latin Church. Permission of the bishop or of the diocesan vocation bureau is not required. Information is needed for the sake of order and for any follow-up when required.
3. As was noted earlier in this paper, requirement of a permission does not imply prohibition.
4. The entire Christian community but especially all bishops have the obligation to be concerned about vocations for the universal Church, especially for the missions. No Church can consider priestly and religious vocations as its own "property."
5. A genuine missionary vocation, by its very nature, can imply a call to transcend the limits of geography and culture, including one's rite.
6. A religious vocation is a matter of one's religious beliefs,

namely, what one is convinced is a call from God. A person will need help to discern it; but he/she cannot be subjected to coercion of any kind in this matter. Pressurising a person in the matter of vocation on the basis of rite is against his/her religious freedom and opposed to the mind of the Council.

7. However, no human right is just absolute. Its exercise can be curtailed if it goes against the common good. For example, if the fundamental right of freedom of expression imperils the common good as in the case of inciting rebellion and sedition, legitimate authority can and should restrict it.

8. Therefore it is possible that the Apostolic See can refuse permission to a member of an Eastern Church to enter a religious institute of the Latin Church if it would imperil the common good.

This last point needs further clarification. Drawing a parallel with CCEO 452/1 may be helpful for this. This canon prescribes "that clerics cannot be licitly admitted to the novitiate without consulting the eparchial bishop; they cannot be licitly admitted if the bishop objects on the ground that their departure will cause grave harm to souls which cannot be avoided by other means." Serious, unavoidable spiritual harm to the faithful is the *only* reason which can make a bishop object to a cleric's departure to enter a religious institute. Applying this parallel from CCEO itself, it can be legitimately concluded that, if because of lack of sufficient number of vocations in the diocese of the candidate, "serious, unavoidable spiritual harm" will be caused to the faithful, the Apostolic See, at the representation of the bishop, may refuse permission to such a candidate. This is equivalent to saying that such a person needs to make a more thorough discernment about his vocation. No other objection seems tenable in the spirit of Vatican II and the Codes.

### When is this permission to be obtained? And by whom?

The wording of the two canons is: "No one can be licitly *admitted to the novitiate* . . . without the permission . . ." But in actual practice, the Apostolic See, through the Congregation for Oriental Churches, has been giving this permission *before the first profession*. Obtaining permission at the time of entrance to the novitiate could turn out to be an exercise in futility because the novitiate is a period of search and discernment of one's vocation as well as of formation in the institute. Hence it is possible that a novice may



choose to leave during the novitiate. It is more reasonable to obtain this permission before the first profession when the candidate has made a more definitive choice of his state of life. And that is the actual practice. It is the Superior of the religious institute who has to apply for this permission on behalf of the candidate or, rather, who has to forward the candidate's application.

### **The Syro-Malabar Church and vocations to religious institutes of the Latin Church.**

In discussing this topic, the reality of the Church in Kerala and India and its unique features have to be kept in mind. In India the Church is faced with powerful world religions like Hinduism and Islam; religious fundamentalism and revivalism and consequently communal tensions are on the increase in an alarming proportion; the Syro-Malabar Church is the most numerous Eastern Church after the Ukrainian Church; it is relatively powerful economically and educationally and has a large number of priestly and religious vocations. Missionaries from the Syro-Malabar Church can be found practically in every diocese and every religious institute of the Latin Church in India; the Latin Church has been established in other parts of India for centuries. In such a situation, the demand of the Gospel is that the Syro-Malabar Church continue to send its missionaries to dioceses and religious institutes of the Latin Church in India. It is helpful here to recall the words of the Pope while presenting the CCEO to the Synod of Bishops on 25 October 1990: "Both Codes gain their force from the same solicitude of the Vicar of Christ, entirely directed towards establishing in the universal Church that 'tranquility of order', which, as I have deliberately wished to express in both promulgative Apostolic Constitutions of the Codes, 'assigns the primacy to love, grace and charism' . . ."<sup>5</sup> The need of the Church in India at the present times is a deep unity between the individual churches, not rivalry, so that it can in reality be a sacrament of unity, fraternity and reconciliation, expressing in its life "the primacy of love, grace and charism."

As a matter of fact, the tradition of the Church to establish religious institutes of Pontifical right exempting them from the direct jurisdiction of the local bishop (CIC c. 591; CCEO c. 412/2) is a very apt symbol of the essence of the missionary call to transcend the boundaries of diocese, nation, culture and rite for the sake of the Gospel.

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5. See footnote 3 above.

## Kerala Jesuit Province and Syro-Malabar vocations

In a letter dated 1 November 1991 regarding candidates to the Society of Jesus from Eastern Churches, the Superior General of the Jesuits writes: "Since ministers (priests and deacons) must celebrate sacraments according to their own rite (cf. CIC c. 846/2; CCEO c. 40/2 and 674/2), if there is an apostolic need to minister according to another rite, biritual faculties are needed. I will delegate to the Provincials of the Provinces of the Near East and Kerala<sup>6</sup> the faculty received from the Holy See of granting to their members an indult of biritualism (Latin-Oriental or Oriental-Latin, according to the individual case), for the length of time and under the conditions they judge to be appropriate."<sup>7</sup> There are two elements in biritualism: (1) a person keeps his own rite; (2) he is given the faculty to minister to the faithful in their own rite which is different from his own. Ministering to the faithful in their own rite implies that the minister is properly instructed in it. This means that although he retains his own rite, in reality he practices also another rite. To do this, he needs a dispensation from the Holy See; the indult of biritualism grants him this dispensation. In effect this is what CCEO c. 452 and c. 517/2 prescribe. The only difference is that the faculty of biritualism which the Jesuit General can grant to the members of the Provinces of the Near East and Kerala exempts him from having recourse to the Holy See in each case of candidates from Oriental churches entering the Society of Jesus in these two provinces.

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6. The Province of the Near East was established as an Oriental Mission of the Society of Jesus in 1925; the Province of Kerala, established as an independent Vice-Province in 1960, is co-terminous with the State of Kerala and ministers to Catholics of both Latin and Oriental churches and has been granted the privilege of biritualism from the beginning.

7. *Acta Romana Societatis Jesus*, XX(1991) 611 ff.

## Note

### The Concord Incantation of Atharvaveda III, 30

While I was rereading this incantation recently, Pauline echoes awoke in my mind. More exactly they were Deutero-Pauline and evoked chiefly *Ephesians* 5:21-6:9 and *Colossians* 3:18-4:1.<sup>1</sup> These are the "lists of family duties" (named *Haustafel* since Luther). They are no longer directly focused on the eschatological hope but are rather a mark of the Christians' inculturation to the ethics of the Greco-Roman *familia*. They integrate this ethics but they elevate it and are deeply Christo-centric.

*Ephesians* establishes first the equality in mutual dependence and respect of all members of the family but bases it on reverence for Christ : *Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ*. Then in a surprising vertical leap, it radically exalts the conjugal union in the light of the Union of Christ with the Church as with his Body. This, it says, is the mystery indicated by *Genesis* 2:24: *the two shall become one*.

Seemingly because of a common tradition of Indo-European patriarchy, the family-ethics (*kula-dharma*) of the Vedic society had close affinities with the ethical ideals of the Greco-Roman large families (which comprised even the slaves). The Vedic society was essentially a commonwealth of families. It was centred on *jajna*, the

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<sup>1</sup> These epistles seem to have originated probably from Ephesos, the capital (*metropolis*) of Asia Minor. According to *Acts* 19, Paul had stayed there a surprisingly long time: two years. He had settled in the school of a certain Tyrannous and used to teach there daily (from eleven to four in the afternoon, add some manuscripts). Did he not spend many another hour listening to his host and dialoguing with him about Greek (Stoic?) philosophy, a hypothesis dear to the lamented bishop Pietro Rossano?

A masterly survey of the available knowledge about Ephesos and of its vast increase due mainly to continued excavations and incessant discoveries of inscriptions, etc., is to be found in the article of G.H.R. HORSLEY, "The Inscriptions of Ephesos and the New Testament," *Vetus Testamentum*, 34/2 (1992) 105-168.

sacrifice of praise and feeding of the beneficent *devas* (gods).<sup>2</sup> These were believed to be working in unison to preserve *ṛta*, the all-adjusting order which was like the spinal column of the universe; sacrificing thrice daily was the duty of the married couples. Indeed, their marriage was not simply a conjugal union but a terminal sacrament (*samskara*), the fifteenth for the bridegroom, the single but total one for the bride, which made them co-offerers and full members of that sacrificial society. to maintain order and concord within the family was for them a basic duty, essential to their *kula-dharma*, but they knew that without assistance they would fail to preserve them. this assistance, they sought in incantations, that is, in the magic power of certain sentences. Their religious faith included belief in the magic power of words. Could we interpret this as an obscure recognition of the saving power of the absolute Word, the divine Logos? Whatever be the answer, recourse to the incantation for concord implied humility and religious trust. who was entitled to recite it? Very probably a Brahmin for it is part of the Vedic lore preserved in the memories of a line of brahmin specialists of this Veda or of the four (*caturvedis*)

Here is a translation of it which makes use of the well-known translations of Bloomfield and Whitney:<sup>3</sup>

1. Unity of hearts and unity of minds,  
freedom from hatred do I procure for you.  
Do you take delight in one another  
as the cow in her new-born calf!

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2. The "gods" were conceived as invisible but powerful individuals dwelling in the dev, the lit part of the universe; hence, their name *deva*. They were not endowed with any absolute godhead. They were ministers of the cosmos, each one fulfilling (in unison with the others) a special task of maintenance of the cosmic order (*ṛta*) which itself was like the spinal column of the universe. After the Vedic Indians had reached the conviction that the whole universe must have arisen from one Cause, they became conceived as creatures, the first sons of Prajapati, and working under his rulership.

As such and in their functions, they resembled the angels acknowledged by Jews, Christians and many others. For indubitably pagan inscriptions which certainly refer to angels, see *op.cit.*, p. 123. About angels, see a recent article by S.R.L. CLARK, "Where Have All the Angels Gone?" in *Religious Studies*, 28/2 (1992) 221-234. As to a Greek reconciliation of polytheism with monotheism, here is a passage from PLOTINUS: "Those who really know the power of God do not contract the divine into one, but display it as manifold, as he himself has displayed it in as much as, abiding who he is, he makes many gods, all depending upon him and existing through him and from him" (*Enneads*, 2.9.9).

3. See M. BLOOMFIELD, *Hymns of the Atharva-veda*, Sacred Books of the east, vol.42, 134-135, and C.R. LANMAN, *Whitney's Atharva-veda. Translation and Notes*, Harvard Oriental Series, vol.7, 137-139.

2. The son shall be submissive to his father  
and of the same mind with his mother.  
The wife shall address her husband  
in words sweet as honey and comforting.
3. The brother shall not hate the brother,  
the sister shall not hate the sister.  
Pursuing like courses in harmony,  
speak out words in kindly spirit.
4. That incantation which causes the gods  
not to disagree, nor to hate one another,  
We perform in your home  
as a means of harmony among your people.
5. Led by your leader, sharing his purpose,  
Do not hold yourselves apart but work together,  
moving along  
In solidarity, speaking agreeably to one another.  
I make you of the same aim, of the same mind.
6. Identical shall be your drink,  
in common shall you partake of food.  
I yoke you together in the same harness; be united  
around the flame-worship like spokes around  
the hub.
7. United, like-minded I make you,  
of one bunch all of you, by my conciliation.  
Be like the gods who guard (the realm of) immortality.  
May well-willing be yours, night and day!

When the mayor of Paris wrote to Napoleon proposing that the Concord Square (Place de la Concorde) be renamed Napoleon Square, the French emperor sent him a negative reply. The French, he said, had a much greater need of that virtue than of his own glory. Should not the same be said of the Indians today? And could we not make good use in our religious and interreligious gatherings of the finest and most humane among the Vedic incantation for concord?

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## Forum

### No Imitation: Only Admiration

Ignatius Hirudayam has initiated an interesting discussion on "Ashram, Theologizing, Inculturation" [VJTR 56(1992)439-443], by his response to the article "From Alienation to Inculturation: Some Reflection on doing Theology Today in India" by George M. Soares-Prabhu.<sup>1</sup> Hirudayam objects to Soares-Prabhu's evaluation of the inculturation and theologizing currently taking place in some Indian Christian *Ashrams*: "Not inculturation but imposture" (82), "often slavish imitations of brahminical rituals, brahminical regulations of diet, Hindu techniques of prayer" (97) and so on.

Hirudayam thinks that "these words may bring comfort to certain people in the Church," finds an "antithetical mentality" as the cause of Soares-Prabhu's fear and tries to disprove him.

The sincerity and honesty of those in the Christian *Ashrams* in trying to give the Christian faith an Indian expression cannot be questioned. The Indian Church should be grateful to them for their daring and pioneering work against so many odds and opposition. They have ventured to do it when neither the path nor the direction were clearly spelt out. But that does not mean that all that is going on there could be accepted or approved without questioning.

The Ashrams may have had an initial legitimation and orientation from the *All India Seminar on the Church in India Today, 1969*. The orientation given in that Seminar cannot be claimed to have a canonical status today, nor can one cling to it without further evaluation. The Church has been enriched with so many newer insights during the intervening period, as a result of new experience, in-

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1. In *Bread and Breath: Essays in Honour of Samuel Rayan S.J.*, ed. T.K. JOHN, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, Anand, 1991, pp. 55-99.

volvement and reflection. Soares-Prabhu in the above article is actually proposing that these newer insights be integrated not only in to Ashram life but in to the life and activity of the Indian Church as a whole.

But Fr Hirudayam seems to miss this point. He points to a progressive theological change in the field of inculturation from the "Fulfilment Theology" to the "Sacrament of Salvation" theology and now to the theology of "Inter-Religious symbiosis." Yet he does not relate this change to that specific element of Christian spirituality which Soares-Prabhu has pointed out as love expressed in an "option for the poor" (98). In his response this point is neither denied nor referred to.

Instead the author tries to show that the Indian Mass was not a slavish imitation but was genuinely inspired by Christian and Indian traditions; its "seven proclamations and acclamations which communicate a cosmic and global perspective and attitudes, the double epiclesis, the institution narrative . . . , the anamnesis and the doxology are both Biblical and Indian," the Indian inspiration coming from "the canonical scriptures of Indian theistic religions and the vast corpus of the *Agamic* cultic worship." He also reports how the Hindus who had attended this Mass have said, "This Mass clearly speaks to our hearts and we clearly see its distinction from the Hindu *puja* in the fact that it is centred on the historic event of Calvary." The interesting point here is that the argument stops at the level of cult and ritual, not taking into consideration the newer insights pointed out by Soares-Prabhu's critique, and thus almost proving his assessment.

Fr Hirudayam also reports how he told Mgr Rossano from the Secretariat for Non-Christians, while watching the morning *puja* in the great Chidambaram temple, "this worship has been the way of salvation for millions and millions of my forbears down the millennia." Further he adds as his present position, "I am convinced that it has a right to be integrated into the Indian Christian worship." In this one may not be able to accuse him of promoting "slavish imitation." But one can notice a romantic admiration for and an uncritical acceptance of elite Hindu rituals. Perhaps, we find here a model of the way the inter-religious symbiosis is taking place in some Christian Ashrams.

A historical analysis of the "great Chidambaram temple" where the worship was supposed to be "the way of salvation for millions and millions of my forbears down the millennia" will show that the

same worship had been the symbol of damnation to Nandanar and millions and millions of his *Dalit* forbears and their offspring down the millennia.<sup>2</sup> If we approach the matter with a Christian sensitivity inspired by a God who takes the side of the poor, who rejects cults and rituals if they tend to overlook or legitimate the injustice done to the poor; a Christ who took the whip to cleanse the temple when it was turned into a robbers' den by defrauding the poor; and a Spirit who anoints the prophets to announce the good news to the poor — this sensitivity will give us a different orientation and different assessment.

That is why a genuine theology today cannot be just global, cosmic and eternal without first being concrete, contextual and contemporary. The inculturation as conversion cannot stop just with the dialogical partners returning "to their own centres." It should be a collective conversion to the reign of God enabling them to discern the voice of God in the yearnings and struggles of the poor and to join them in actions of solidarity. It is here that Hindu dialogue partners will have something unique to absorb from Christians in the process of inter-religious symbiosis. The confluence, or the *sangamam* as Fr Hirudayam would call it, should take place not only in our mind and heart, for it is not just to do with an idea or an inner experience, but should also be translated into a common commitment to a concerted action to join God in his historical project of transforming the world into his Kingdom.

It is here Soares-Prabhu has made a valuable point which cannot be dismissed without damaging the unique contribution Christianity can make to India. Therefore, his words are not meant to "bring comfort to some people in the Church," but to be a matter of concern to all who love God, his people and his Church. As a result his words cannot be ignored as an outcome of "an antithetical mentality." When faced with sin and grace, life and death, faith and idolatry, justice and injustice, God and Mammon, etc., we cannot help but being antithetical. However good the universal and cosmic outlooks may be, we cannot swallow the above opposites in the name of dialogue and inculturation. They cannot be included, if they are present, in an act of inter-religious symbiosis. They are fundamentally evangelical anti-theses.

From the perspective of Christian spirituality, to make inculturation, dialogue and theologizing instruments of conversion and transformation, an active involvement in the life and struggle of the

<sup>2</sup> Cf. S. MANICKAM, *Nandanar: The Dalit Martyr*, C.L.S. Madras, 1990.



ordinary masses, though at various levels, is necessary. Our expertise in the classical religious literature and elite ritual practices, though necessary, is not sufficient. It resembles the "court theology" of the Old Testament which justified the existing inequalities and injustice. Exclusive preoccupation with these elements will easily make our Ashrams and Seminaries museums of religious archaeology and godowns of cultic implements. This will make them fertile seedbeds for the menace of fundamentalism.<sup>3</sup> As in the Old Testament, where the palace theology was challenged and corrected by the people's and prophetic theologies, the Brahminic and elite theology has to be critiqued.

As such, there is a crying need for a greater familiarity with the cry of the poor and the prophetic voices that come from the perspective of the poor. This requires some involvement at the grass-roots as well as an effort to learn from the critiques of Brahminic Hinduism from the life and writings of persons like Sri Narayana Guru, E.V. Ramasamy Periyar, Dr B.R. Ambedkar and even Mahatma Gandhi. With their inspirations and experiences from the grass-roots, Indian Christian theology and inculturation can now enter into a new stage of growth. Our prayer, contemplation, worship and action for the welfare of humanity (*lokasangraha*) can take their inspiration and content not only from India's classical past but also from the concrete present which has gone beyond the Indian Renaissance.

Vidyajyoti, Delhi.

P. AROCKIADOSS, S.J.

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3. Cf. Geiko MULLER-FAHRENHOLZ, "What is Fundamentalism Today? Perspectives in Social Psychology." in *Concilium*, 1992/3, pp. 14-21. The other articles in this issue discuss the question of fundamentalism from various angles.

# Book Reviews

## Mission

**Transforming Mission. Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission.** By David J. BOSCH. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991. Pp. xx-587. \$ 24.95. ISBN 068344-719-3.

We have introduced the author of this book at the beginning of his own article in this issue of the Journal. It is a tragedy for missiology that this leading thinker should have died at a relatively young age. This *magnum opus* of his published last year is bound to become a major source book in missiology for years to come. The study is published as no. 16 in the prestigious American Society of Missiology series. It has three main parts.

The first part (pp. 15-178) studies the NT as a missionary document, the salient features of Jesus' person and ministry (31-41), and the mission of the Apostolic Church. Then three chapters are devoted to a competent study of the mission theologies of Matthew, for whom mission means disciple-making, of Luke-Acts, with the stress on forgiveness and solidarity with the poor, and of Paul who invites all to join the eschatological community. The author justifies the restriction to these three NT theologians (54-55) but one may regret the absence of the study of John's understanding of mission, since he so much stressed the *missio Dei*.

The second part (pp. 181-345) is perhaps the richest. It studies four different paradigms of mission that emerged after the apostolic times. This judicious use of the paradigm and paradigm shift categories characterises this whole study. The first paradigm is that developed in the early centuries by the Eastern Church which built up a Christian culture around the Gospel, thus performing a stabilising role in the existing world order based on an accepted orthodoxy and a visual presentation of the Gospel. But the mission remains somewhat other world oriented and fails in the task of

emancipation. The leitmotif of this paradigm could be Jn 3:16. The second paradigm is the medieval Roman Catholic paradigm as it emerged between 600 and 1500. Like in all paradigm shifts, there is here both continuity and discontinuity. The stress is now on the cross rather than the incarnation. The paradigm develops a more individualist understanding of salvation which is, paradoxically, more "ecclesiasticized" (*extra ecclesiam...*). It works out a theological synthesis of the world and the Church based on the model of nature and supernature, and one could say that, in this ordered universe, the leitmotif of mission is Lk 14:23. However, "the current Roman Catholic missionary paradigm is fundamentally different from the traditional one" (238). The third paradigm is the Protestant one which substitutes the Catholic synthesis for the sin-grace tension. Its text is Rom 1:16-17. It took time for the Protestant churches to develop a mission consciousness, and Bosch explains the reasons for this (243-8). The stress will be on correct doctrine and correct administration of the sacraments. The Church is isolated from its public role although it works generally in close liaison with the State, even in its missionary activity (261). The stress is on the subjective dimensions of salvation and the fall. The fourth and last paradigm studied in this part emerged with the Enlightenment and affected mostly the Protestant Church, and later, to a lesser degree, also the Catholic world. It is a baffling paradigm without clear direction. It is wedded to a growing self-assurance of the Western civilisation confident that it could solve all problems. Yet with the desecralisation of society the mission remains largely other-worldly in orientation. The paradigm also relativises the Christian standpoint in an atmosphere of rationalism. It is anthropocentric

to the core and has lost the teleological dimension in its understanding of the world: only efficient causality explains every event! A cluster of texts express the various orientations of this paradigm: Acts 16:9, Mt 24:14, Jn 10:10 but specially the "Great Commission" (Mt 28:18-20), interpreted in a fundamentalistic and polemical way against the "liberal" trends. Obedience is the only correct response to the "Great Commission" — and thus the Gospel becomes law!

The fifth paradigm is studied in part III (pp. 349-519). It is the "post-modern paradigm" characteristic of the 19th and 20th centuries, that does not reject all the elements of the others but integrates them into a new cultural framework. Gone is the old assurance missionaries could have of the superiority of their culture, gone the facile optimism of indefinite progress, gone also the dichotomy of the subject/object scheme, gone, too easily, many of the certitudes of the Christian understanding. In chapter 12 Bosch outlines the elements of this emerging paradigm. It is difficult to see how they form a consistent whole. We can just enumerate them: mission as the Church-with-others, as *Missio Dei*, as mediating salvation, as the quest for justice, as evangelism, as contextualization, as liberation, as inculturation, as common witness, as ministry by the whole people of God, as witness to people of living faith (including theology or religions and dialogue), as theology, as action in hope. The study ends with these words: "Looked at from this perspective mission is, quite simply, the participation of Christian in the liberating mission of Jesus, wagering on a future that verifiable experience seems to belie: It is the good news of God's love, incarnated in the community, for the sake of the world" (519).

Earlier we regretted the absence of the study of John's missiology in the first part. There are other lacunae. Although the theological orientation of the author is clearly reformed, in general he is aware of the Catholic tradition and is quite fair to its values, with particular warmth for Vatican II. But even while he qualifies

the affirmation that William Carey is "the architect of modern missions" he fails to take into account the development of Catholic mission and practice from the 16th century. Not all was tied to the padronado or padroado, not everything was medieval in inspiration. In Asia (except for the Philippines) the presence of the Catholic nations was more commercial than conquistador. The Jesuits and other orders worked at times in situations quite delinked even from the commercial presence of the Western nations: in Japan, in China, in the Madurai mission itself in South India and in the earlier Franciscan mission. These surely represent a new paradigm of mission different from the medieval one in many respects, some - what "modern" in outlook, a paradigm that would be partly followed by the Protestants two centuries later (Carey). This fact is not sufficiently attended to. Among the 500 authors in the bibliography I could spot only three from India: V. Samuel, Thomas D'Sa, G. Soares-Prabhu, besides two who have worked or work in India: K. Klostermeyer and L. Legrand. Is there not a much richer missiological tradition in India? Panikkar is alluded to a few times, and could perhaps be more used, C.F. Andrews had a good deal to say on mission; more recently the Indian Theological Association has come out with much reflection which is not sufficiently reflected in this book.

However, what we get is surely of great value: we have a synthesis of much of the missiological thinking specially as developed in the West during the last centuries; we get an insight into the varieties of mission theology in the NT and into the movement of the mission through the centuries; we are offered paradigms that help us understand and see the weak and the strong points; we find a broad-based theology for today firmly based on the Bible and within which one can on the whole feel comfortable. As L. Luzbetak SVD says, "unquestionably (this book) stands out as the most comprehensive and enlightened work on mission models studied across

Christian traditions and mission history."

*Transforming Mission* means both: an understanding of mission that is being transformed in the course of time, and a practice of mission oriented to transform the world into the Kingdom of God. We are grateful to the great Christian that David J. Bosch was for the years of study and reflection concentrated in this work.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

*New Directions in Mission and Evangelization 1. Basic Statements 1974-1991.* Edited by James A. SCHERER and Stephen B. BEVANS, s.v.d. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1992. Pp. xx-324. \$ 16.95 (pbk.). ISBN 0-88344-792-4.

This is the first volume in a new Orbis Series *New Directions in Mission and Evangelization* which "will offer collections of recent articles and papers, all previously published but not easily available to students and scholars of mission" (ii). The present volume makes available documents or excerpts from statements/documents of an official/quasi official or representative nature of the WCC, "Roman Catholic Church, Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Church and Evangelical Protestant movements. These documents come from the period 1974-1991. The Editors in an Introduction and Overview survey Conciliar Ecumenical (WCC), Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Evangelical Missiology from a historical and theological perspective.

The Evangelical Missiology is represented by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (1974 LCWE - with its two basic documents the Lausanne covenant and Manila Manifesto) and the World Evangelical Fellowship (1951 WEF) which works with the LCWE. The three Orthodox statements (1986, '88 and '90) reflect the fact that mission has become a major concern again only more recently.

Anyone familiar with the WCC and Catholic Church are aware how prominent a part of their life is mission. There are major Papal and WCC explicitly mission documents and excerpts from other documents which incorporate the dimen-

sion of mission. It is interesting to note that of the fourteen official statements by the Catholic Church 9 originate in Rome, one each in Asia (FABC 1986, Tokyo), South America (Puebla, 1979) Africa (1986) and two from the US Bishops. Local and denominational (except Catholic) statements have not been included.

The purpose of the collection is to foster greater knowledge, understanding, trust and respect among members of different Christian traditions for each other in regard to mission and evangelism. The selections have to be put into their context and excerpts read within the whole document.

An interesting study would be to use the major ideas in David Bosch's article in this issue as a way to evaluate basic attitudes to mission found in these various types of statements.

A valuable collection and we look forward to the further volumes

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

*Mission in the Nineteen 90s.* Edited by G. H. ANDERSON, J. M. PHILLIPS and Robert T. COOTE. Grand Rapids: Wm.B.Eerdmans, 1991. Pp. 80. \$ 10.95 (pbk.) ISBN 0-8028-0542-6.

This is a collection of seventeen articles which have appeared in the International Bulletin of Missionary Research during 1989-90. The authors from eleven countries of the five continents belong to many different Churches (Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, Methodist, Evangelical, Orthodox, Pentecostal), and represent very diverse theologies of mission.

Within these few pages many areas related to mission are addressed such as liberation, unreached people, dialogue, ecology, peace and justice, reign of God, option for the poor, evangelization, paradigms for mission, common witness, mission and Bible, mission in Asia . . . . The line up of authors is very impressive - Amaladoss, Newbegin, Mary Motte, Desmond Tutu, Rene Padilla, Emilio Castro, Arevalo, Bosch, Anderson . . . .

This small book could be read along with the official Statements gathered in the previous book published by Orbis

and a comparison could be made between the missiology to be found in the Statements and in these leading missiology thinkers. This deserves to be in good libraries and will increase understanding between various Christian Traditions.

There are two very useful bibliographic collections - *Christian Mission and Religious Pluralism: A Selected Bibliography of 175 Books in English, 1970-1990* and *150 Outstanding Books for Mission Studies*.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

*Culture, Dialogue and the Church*. By Jacob MANATHODATH. New Delhi: Intercultural Publications, 1990. Pp. xxvi-194, Rs. 150.

The book is a study of Pope Paul VI's teachings on the inculturation of the local churches. It begins with an explanation of the terms 'inculturation' and 'local church' and proceeds to examine what the Pope has said on the relation between the two.

Evangelization in its integral sense includes also the transformation of cultures from within through their permeation by the Gospel values. How this process is related to human development according to the Pope is also examined.

As culture is intimately linked to religion, the Church in order to understand more deeply the culture of a place must enter into dialogue with the religions of the place. Such a dialogue will enable the Church to evangelize that religious culture. In this context the book proceeds to show what the Pope has taught on dialogue. It progresses further, showing the ongoing nature of the evangelization of cultures in so far as both are dynamic. The book concludes by pointing out three of the major areas in the Pope's teaching on inculturation, viz., liturgy, theology and catechesis.

The book is a well-documented presentation of the Pope's teaching on the subject. However, a reader looking for a critical study of the same may be disappointed. The author cannot be blamed if the reader does not find the influence of the Pope's teachings in the life of the

Church in the light of the developments since Vatican II or if the relevant questions remain unanswered such as, is inculturation only to evangelize cultures? What exactly is a local church? How are the structures of the Church related to inculturation? What exactly is the real, divinely instituted, unnegotiable identity of the Church in relation to inculturation?, etc. The author's aim is "to present it (the Pope's teachings on the subject) in a systematic way" (p.xxiii) and that he has done well.

Bombay. Jacob KAYUNKAL, SVD  
*Vocation For Mission. The Challenge of Religious Life Today*. By Marcello AZEVEDO, S.J., Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1988. Pp.xvi-188. \$ 9.95 (pbk.). ISBN 0-8091-3024-6.

This book ought to have been reviewed long ago. It is an excellent study because of the primacy given to mission, the life of Jesus and the primacy of the Gospel, the preferential option for the poor, the christological basis for mission and religious life, the sense of the Church and the wisdom, insights, theological depth and simplicity displayed throughout the essays.

I have used the book for lectures, lent it to others who invariably have wanted to know where to get a copy. This is the translation of the 4th edition (1986) of the original Brazilian edition (1977) and there are Italian, Spanish, French, German and Polish translations.

The four chapters given to obedience (*The Vow of Obedience, A New Vision of Religious Obedience, Human Decisions and the Will of God and Obedience, the Preferential Option for the Poor, and Conscientious Objection*) open up vistas and will be very helpful to many religious.

Azevedo studies Poverty and Chastity, the Fundamental Dimensions of a Religious Community and the Mission of Evangelization. A special chapter is given to Women Religious in the Church.

Since the framework for the study of religious life is the apostolic nature of this vocation within the Church and since

it is responsive to the actual needs of the human community, the study itself has been influenced by context, modern theological insights, insights from psychology and Scripture. There is a freshness about this collection of articles by Azevedo who has been involved with religious life in Brazil as President of the national conference and in international meetings and as an adviser to many groups of religious. This is highly recommended and a book worth publishing in India.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

## Christology

*Images of Jesus. How Jesus Is Perceived and Portrayed in Non-European Cultures.* By Anton WESSELS, *Grand Rapids*: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1990. Pp. ix-195. \$12.95. ISBN 0-8028-0287-7.

We gather together a few books on the person (Christology) and mission (Soteriology) of Jesus Christ. We begin with a book which highlights a major challenge today and which reminds all Christian thinkers of the need to be far more sensitive to the whole Christian community. From the point of view of content Wessels describes the way Jesus has been portrayed over centuries in European countries and then by Jews, by the conquering colonial powers in central and south America, Africa, Suriname, Asia, India and China. There is a short section under *The Scourged Christ* on Christopher ("The Christ-Bearer") Columbus!! He also describes the Christ to be found more recently in indigenous theological thinking of representative authors in these countries. The question which he asks throughout is "whether we are dealing with so many legitimate representations of Jesus Christ and facets of his work and significance or whether at times and even more frequently he is misrepresented, caricatured or ever betrayed" (Pp. 13-14).

One major area of "betrayal" has been the neglect of the historical life and work of Jesus of Nazareth so that his death and resurrection are cut off from and not incorporated into the significance

of his life among and for his people and of his own personal decisions. The Jewish study of Jesus and much modern theology teaches us to honour the life of Jesus. A second and related "betrayal" has been the more or less utter neglect of the importance of the socio-economic and political significance of Jesus Christ, partly related to the identification of Church and so Christ with civil power and the bonds between Church and colonial conquests, with few voices raised for human dignity, equality and the rights of the people of the Americas, Asia and Africa. This is so true as we become aware during the questionable celebrations of Columbus and the demonstrations by the indigenous people. The final area of "betrayal" is the neglect of the continued process of "inculturated Incarnation". Jesus Christ needs not only to baptize but be baptized by the religions, cultures and people of various nations. In place of the western either/or we need the both/and (Ying/Yang), the already and not yet and the text and context.

The book consistently reminds us of the neglected aspects—Jesus as exorcist, healer, liberator, teacher and human person. Modern theologians are also challenged to discern the adequacy of their portrayals of Jesus Christ, to be aware of their provisional character, possible betrayals and the challenge inherent in all attempts to understand him and his work in our modern world with its religious pluralism, cultural diversity and shameful socio-economic and political injustice. This book deserves to be read.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

*Jesus, Christ and Saviour (Message of the Father of the Church Vol 2).* By Gerard H. EITLINGER, S.J., *Collegeville*: M. Glazier (Liturgical Press), 1987. Pp. 214. \$9.95 (pbk.). ISBN 0-89453-5514-6.

A second book which deserves to be on a basic reading list for theological students introduces us to the struggles of early Christian thinkers who tried to articulate the "who" and the "what" of Jesus Christ. As indicated in the title, the author insists that we consider the person

and work of Jesus together. He selects texts which enable us to follow the unfolding message (Faith) behind the controversies and not the controversies themselves of the Fathers since an anthology of the stances taken in the controversies found in their "Treatises" already exists (Richard A. Harris, *The Christological Controversy* [Fortress 1980]). Therefore, he has selected pieces from homilies, letters and less formal writings from the post-scriptural period up to the 5th Century. What we notice is the diversity and pluralism of understanding in writings accepted as orthodox, though not articulated in the language of the conciliar statements. Some of the writers were considered unorthodox to some Christian Churches (Origen, Tertullian, Theodore of Mopsuetia). The author has often chosen texts not found in other collections. The texts are printed as if they were continuous omitting the ugly ... yet references guide the reader to the sources.

In a section of the Introduction Etlinger indicates the relevance of the selection to modern concerns. Though he mentions justice in a paragraph, nearly two pages are given to the importance in the Fathers of the emphasis on the humanity of Jesus and so his universal significance and not his maleness. However he could have drawn attention to the more fascinating and important aspects of the diverse attempts to speak of the person and work of Jesus, namely the spontaneous manner in which the original message, expressed within a biblical world view (helleno-semitic) was either passed on in its biblical theological categories or in dialogue with and influenced by other world views and media of communications.

Each selection, collected century wise (Greek/Latin for 4th C.) has an introduction to the writer and then the selections are given of representative and important writings. We note how important John's Gospel and his Prologue were and the constant interplay between the fully human and fully divine character of Jesus Christ with a tendency to either highlight the divinity or humanity. Also

we note the shift of emphasis to Christology from Soteriology and the need to keep both in a healthy interrelationship.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

**Jesus: One and Many.** The Christological Concept of New Testament Authors. By Earl RICHARD. Collegeville: Michael Glazier (Liturgical Press) 1988. Pp.546. \$21.95. ISBN 0-89453-5641-2.

A complete scriptural study of NT Christologies (less explicitly soteriology) draws our attention to their unity within a rich diversity. This book could also function as a fine introduction to the way to study the NT and each book or collection of books since Richard pays great attention to the nature of the NT books and to methods of interpretation especially the diverse literary-critical methods. He omits unfortunately the liberation hermeneutic and the socio-economic dimension and its influence on the writings of the NT if not on Jesus' life. In the chapter on Paul's letters, apart from background study, he comments on the letter form, pauline chronology and studies each letter in the way such study is done in classical introductions with only a relatively short section (pp 321-32) on Paul's creed—Christ crucified.

The author does not want to study the historical Jesus but the diverse ways in which the writings of the NT have understood Jesus Christ. The book is written for students who have basic knowledge and want to acquire a deeper and more nuanced grasp of biblical Christology. Apart from judicious footnotes which provide plenty of scope for further study, there are Suggested Readings for each of the 13 chapters and an Index. After the introduction to the subject, biblical study and the Jesus tradition prior to the Gospels, Richard studies the Gospels (Part II), Paul and Paulinist Writings (Part III), General Letters and Revelation (Part IV). In the final part he and a colleague describe Jesus in Post-New Testament Times.

A more general comment on the book would be that it is rich in contemporary biblical Christology, reflecting good

judgment, consensus scholarly opinions, personal understanding of text and abundant information. This will help the student very much and yet personal reflective reading of the text is a must to capture the elusive character of Jesus Christ as reflected in these special writing which finally escape every study and systematization. From the perspective of Paul's Christology the Jesus Christ of each letter does not really emerge. The study of the Gospels and their systemization are valuable, and yet I missed the living person. The book is in a sense dry and informative. Only mulling over the texts during and after reading of this author's attempt to provide insights (personal and those of other scholars) will the heart be moved.

Attentive to the depth or dynamic structure of the Gospels and the titles used by the writers, Richard describes the Christology of Mark (Christ/ Son of Man/ Son of God); Matthew (Jesus, Son of God, Christ, Son of man—"a Christology in search of an authentic ecclesiology" (156); Luke and John. He summarizes Luke-Acts in these terms: "Theologically, it is the concept of divine visitation of and care for humanity through Jesus, God's intermediary, which provides the unity of Luke's vision and the basis for the continuity of salvation history (promise, fulfilment, actualization). Jesus is the Christ of God" (185). The study of John would have been enriched by the important work of Mlakuzhyil since Richard approaches his study from the interrelationship of depth structure and titles. He judges that "a major concern of the Johannine community and its evangelist was to establish the messiahship of Jesus" (209).

The few pages explicitly given to Paul's Christology provide an valuable schematization though a major dimension is omitted, namely the importance of the Father /God and Jesus as Son. I reject any reference to Adam in the Philippian's hymn. Having read to the end of the long chapter on Paul's letters I still did not really see Jesus Christ as he lived for Paul

The remainder of the book has the same two major features, competent introduction to each biblical book and its content and a distillation of the Christology of each writer. In the opening chapter of the final Part (V) Stephen M. Duffy traces the development of Christology from the earliest non-biblical writers to Chalcedon. Richard's final chapter (Images of Jesus in Popular Post- New Testament Literature) will open up for many readers a new aspect. He allow us to glimpse the popular presentations of Jesus in non- canonical literature.

The book is a mine of information, a good text book and reference book, an educative introduction to the NT and a valuable presentation of biblical Christology. There are lacuna because the information is not adequately related to modern experience and questions, is unaware of liberation theology, Asian and African concerns and is over objective. The vibrant witness to the Jesus Christ who was the love and key to the lives of the writers and their original audience is somehow absent. How to write such a book?

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

*Jesus and Paul. Signs of Contradiction.* By Wilfrid HARRINGTON, O.P., Collegeville: Michael Glazier (Liturgical Press), 1987. Pp. 207. \$ 9.95. ISBN 0-89453-5591-2.

There are endless books on Jesus Christ based on the witness of the New Testament. We include a simple and urgent appeal to value the historical Jesus adequately and the privileged understanding of Jesus by Paul. Harrington evaluates and critiques the effects of systematic theology and theological interpretations in the Gospels especially of John on our understanding and attitude to Jesus Christ as a human person who lived a human life. At the same time in a repetitive fashion and from different perspectives he reclaims, describes and insists on the reality and importance of the fully human life of Jesus of Nazareth. A corollary of this is that "God is God of



humankind (p.61) and "that salvation cannot be a salvation from humanness but in our humanness" (p.80). He has chapters on Jesus as Servant, Jesus and Women, Jesus and Religion and the significance of Jesus' failure in his death. He also indicates how throughout his public life he was a controversial figure. This is a valuable reminder of the essential place of Jesus' historical life in all reflection upon and commitment to Jesus Christ. I would judge that Nolan's *Jesus Before Christianity* has achieved Harrington's goal more adequately than this good but rather repetitive study.

The second part looks at Paul whom he judges to be the *exegete* of Jesus of Nazareth though he never knew him. Harrington does not contrast Jesus and Paul. They are signs of contradiction for us and the Church. The seven chapters on Paul and his theology are simple and insightful. He insists both on Paul's Jewish religious character and roots and on the transformation effected by the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, especially Christ crucified. He correctly emphasizes the primacy of God in justification, atonement, expiation, redemption and reconciliation. He critiques clearly Anselm's God as the Feudal Lord and the theory of Satisfaction. The cross is central and reveals authentically both God and the human. He does not develop the place of the resurrection in Paul adequately. He insists on the subversive nature of Freedom which is "ever circumscribed by love" (p.142) and states: "It seems, however, that Paul's legacy of freedom has not been yet fully claimed by any of the Churches" (p.147). There are parallel chapters in Paul to some of the chapters in the section on Jesus — Paul and Women (clarifies misunderstandings), Paul and Religion and Theology of the Cross. The final chapter about Jesus based on John's Gospel is entitled *A Respectable Jesus* while the final chapter on Paul based on the Pastorals is *The Taming of Paul*. In his judgement the historical Jesus and the authentic gospel of Paul have been dangerously affected by these writ-

ings in the life of the Church.

This is a good introductory book for students, covering basic areas, based on sound scholarship, expressed simply and within a modern and healthy theological framework with apt critiques of questionable and distorted theological traditions and Church practices.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

## Theology

*Dynamics of Theology.* By Roger HAIGHT, S.J. Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1990. Pp. x-274. \$ 12.95. ISBN 0-8091-3177-3.

One subject that dominates so much theological discussion and discussions on the teaching of Theology is *how to do theology or what do we do when we do theology?* Normal students of theology rarely know what are the steps or ingredients involved in "theologizing."

I have used this book with two groups of M.Th. students as a basic textbook and the appreciation of the book has been fundamentally positive. Personally both as an professor of scripture and as theologian I have found the book to be excellent.

Haight reflects upon the foundational elements of Theology. The initial chapters study Faith, Revelation, Scripture and Religious Symbols. The titles of each of the two chapters devoted to each area are indicative of the content and value of the study: *ch.1, Faith as a Dimension of the Human*; *ch.2, Faith and the Community of Beliefs*; *ch.3, The Structure of Revelation*; *ch.4, Revelation and Theology*; *ch.5, The Status of Scripture in the Church*; *ch.6, Scripture and Theology*; *ch.7, The Symbolic Structure of Religion*; *ch.8, Symbolic Religious Communication*

Having laid the foundation as a master builder the final chapters deal explicitly with method under two aspects: *The Structure of Interpretation and Method in Theology*; *Method in Theology* (ch.9 and ch.10). The conclusion (ch.11) entitled *Dynamics of Theology* gathers together all

the threads and strands of thought and adds a valuable reflection of the Ethics of Theology highlighting Responsibility, Honesty and Freedom.

Haight's purpose is not to describe his method or a method. Rather, looking at what has been and is being done by theologians, he describes the elements which deserve to be found in any theological method if that method is to be an adequate method. He insists on plurality of method or the diverse ways the elements will enter the process. He excludes fundamentalism and revelational positivism.

Students have found the description of Faith and Revelation very valuable, the clear distinction between Faith and belief systems, the importance of historicity, the description of the symbolic structure of all articulations of original revelation and the way symbols function as the medium of God's presence and the salvific point of revelation as well as his insistence on the basic inadequacy and the historical and conditional character of all symbolic expressions of revelation: faith.

Outlining the structures, re-interpretation and method he insists on the importance of correlation (contemporary life-symbols of tradition) the starting point and the adequate thematization of questions arising from the experience of negativities, the necessity of critical historical study of the symbols (Scripture - Tradition), the comprehensiveness of the interpreter's anthropology, the need of dialogue (with religions, secular movements, other theologies . . .), the place of the the social sciences . . . In the process of reconstruction he highlights the role of imagination, reason, horizontal dialogue and the empowerment of human life. The criteria for good theology are fidelity (to Tradition and contemporary life) intelligibility (within the Christian community, within the larger world) and empowerment, namely a truly liberative praxis.

I would recommend this to all good theological libraries. Students in the later period of doing a B.Th. or beginning an M.Th. will find this very valuable read-

ing. Many lecturers in theology and scripture will be challenged to clarify and reflect upon the method they pursue. Ought to be a basic textbook for good theological students of any cultural background.

Paddy MEAGHER, S.J.

*Reforming the Church Today. Keeping Hope Alive.* By Hans KUNG. Edinburg: T&T Clark, 1990. Pp. vi-198. £ 12.50. ISBN 0567-09578-9.

This is vintage Kung. It is mostly a collection of articles on his favourite theme of Church reform. The author's goal is to keep hope alive in spite of his perception of regression in the Church in recent years. When a large number of clergy are leaving the ministry and many of the faithful abandoning the Church itself, Kung explains "why I am staying in the Church" and "why I remain a Catholic." He does not want to betray those who are struggling within the Church nor delight his adversaries by leaving.

Kung makes a severe critique of the current style of functioning of the Roman Curia and the Pope himself. Still, he hopes that after the present "Pius XIII" will come another "John XXIV." He proposes a new vision of the future Church with the following perspectives: (1) a Church that is connected with its origin and the present, not one that is infatuated with the past; (2) not a Church of patriarchy, but of partnership; (3) not a narrow denominational Church, but one that is ecumenically open; (4) not Eurocentric, but truly universal.

According to him, the Church has a future only under the following premises: (1) respect for ever greater truth; (2) seeking to learn from other religions; (3) giving the various national, regional and local churches an appropriate autonomy. The Church must dispense with discrimination and the Inquisition, exercise forgiveness, dare a new beginning and make new social and political commitments.

As one would expect, Kung strongly defends the rights of the laity, especially women. He proposes free election of

bishops. He vigorously supports a married clergy and the ordination of women. He wants the condemnation of artificial birth control to be reversed. In this matter, he seems at times to confuse the question of birth control as such and that of methods. He thinks that the Church's stand on divorce and mixed marriages is keeping many away from the sacraments. He does not seem to be aware that the present legislation regarding mixed marriages is flexible enough to accommodate various pastoral situations.

The most interesting chapter is a discussion on the future of pastoral care. First Kung writes "An Open Letter to a Pastor" in which he describes the dramatic situation of pastoral care on the brink of collapse because of an acute shortage of priests. He thinks that the main obstacle to providing eucharistic service to the people, to which they have every right, is compulsory celibacy. Bishop Moser of Rottenburg-Stuttgart gives a spirited reply in which he accuses Kung of promoting a scare when the situation, though difficult, is not without its redeeming features like greater involvement of lay ministers in the pastoral action of the Church. He thinks that we must move from the concept of a "provided parish" to that of a "committed community" and thus avoid a new clericalism. Kung in turn gives an equally spirit response and finds it strange that he is accused of harbouring tendencies which he has fought all through his life. He feels that the bishop is trying to evade facing up to the reality. He grants the value of freely chosen celibacy, but asks whether the law of compulsory celibacy for all priests has a Gospel basis.

The last chapter is a personal *spero* or a hope that the Catholic Church will abandon pretensions, and all privilege, the Protestant Church will overcome fundamentalist tendencies and the Orthodox its totalitarian traditionalism. He also hopes that the Christian churches will adopt a more positive attitude toward the non-Christian religions and that an *oikumene* among the nations will be built

that will promote peace, justice and ecology. In the Documentation section at the end one will find the 1968 Declaration "For the Freedom of Theology," the 1972 Declaration "Against Resignation" and the famous 1989 Cologne Declaration "Against Disenfranchisement: For an Open Catholicity." Needless to say the style of the author is engaging and the treatment thought provoking.

George V. LOBO, S.J.

*Original Sin. Where Doctrine Meets Science.* By Anthony F. ZIMMERMAN, S.V.D. New York: Vantage Press, 1990. Pp. xviii-264. \$ 16.95. ISBN 0-08870-4.

*The Religion of Adam and Eve.* By Anthony F. ZIMMERMAN, S.V.D. New York: Vantage Press, 1991. Pp. xv-159. \$ 14.95. ISBN 0-533-08869-0.

These two companion volumes seek to recapture the original state of humankind. In progressive circles, it is now taken for granted that the narrative in the first chapters of Genesis is not history, but a collection of etiological stories depicting the current condition of humankind and not the original state. *Original Sin* ignores this view and seeks to harmonize the traditional preoccupation with the sin of Adam and Eve with the findings of modern science. Some of the statements of the present Pope seem to provide a basis for a return to the traditional problematic.

However, the author is not naively fundamentalist. He definitely opts for evolutionism as far as the development of the human body is concerned. God would have infused the soul when the body was sufficiently evolved. He calls this qualified evolutionism as the "ongoing symphony of creation." Although he prefers the view that the first humans were a couple and not a population, he does not entirely reject the latter view. He cites the argument of the geneticist Jerome Lejeune that if our race is a new species, then a single couple starting the species is more logical. He also thinks that theological reasons suggest a single couple origin.

When did *homo sapiens* begin? *Homo habilis* with ability to use tools would be "junior humans" that arose 2,500,000 years ago. But in the absence of rapid speech, he would not be able to recognize his responsibilities. So according to fossil records, *homo sapiens* or Adam would have arrived about 200,000 years ago. Eve's family marked by monochondrial DNA would also point to the same era. Our Adam and Eve were constituted by grace. But the serpent intervenes to tempt them leading to alienation. It is only baptism that can counteract this alienation. The devil has come into the open again explicitly in the form of contraceptive propaganda to tackle what the author considers the lie of overpopulation! Thereby, the author manages to inject his pet phobia.

Original sin is transmitted, as Trent declares, "through generation, not imitation." However, we need not accept the view of Augustine regarding the mechanism of infection through the marital embrace. The author indulges in elaborate speculation regarding the state of Adam and Eve before the Fall. However, he does not paint a too rosy picture of Eden where there would have been no pain or burden. Neglecting the more important contributions of Rahner and Schoonenberg, they are taken to task for suggesting that there was "greater accountability" of mind over the senses in the state of original grace. The author emphasizes that even Christ, as our Primate, was not free to avoid suffering. He had to experience our trials. Suffering, in obedience to God, is the test that brings love to perfection.

Thus the author presents the traditional doctrine on Original Sin in a way that looks more credible to the modern mind and more in conformity to modern science. However, he would have done well to deal more directly with current biblical and theological scholarship on Original Sin, also understood in a more social perspective.

The companion volume on *The Religion of Adam and Eve* is a development of the theory of "Original Revelation" in

Eden. The central point about the "Church of Eden" is that our first ancestors were constituted originally in a state of supernatural grace, the grace that is restored to us now by Christ through baptism.

According to the author, Adam and Eve passed on the original revelation to the human race. The greater part of this work is a defence of this position through the evidence from cultural anthropology. The author relies heavily on the findings of Wilhelm Schmidt and his school. The life style of hunter-fruitgatherers, with their belief in a personal God and experience of intimate family life, gives us a glimpse of the Church of Eden. They had a much clearer idea of God and eternal life than the opaque concepts of Greek and Roman philosophers!

Whatever is to be said of this idealization of the Church of Eden now dispersed in many remote tribes in different countries, the account of the beliefs, practices and prayers of these tribes is valuable. The author calls the primordial Church of Eden One, Holy, Catholic though without formal apostolic succession! In some of the descriptions of the beliefs and practices of the hunter-fruit gatherers, the author seems to ignore the existence of Original Sin! However, he thinks that Christ could not have come among them because of their dispersion. So the Redeemer had to come in the *Pax Romana* of Caesar August so that his message could spread rapidly.

In the last chapter, the author dwells on his favourite subject of contraception. Just as the tribal leaders of yore, the modern state is to be the guardian of the Ten Commandments. History indicates a positive correlation between state prosperity and observance of the Ten Commandments. The fifth and sixth are now grossly violated by abortion and contraception. The author does not help matters by mixing up the question of artificial contraception and responsible parenthood. Those who are interested in the author's preoccupation and approach will find both the volumes fascinating.

With all the erudition he displays, he could have made a more positive contribution if he had taken into consideration current biblical and theological scholarship.

George V. LOBO, S.J.

**Women, Religion and Sexuality.** Studies on the Impact of Religious Teachings on Women. Edited by Jeanne BECHER. Geneva: WCC, 1990. Pp. xii-265. \$ 17.50. ISBN 2-8254-0991-X.

The number of books on feminism, whether sociological, indological or theological, has been growing since some years and the trend does not seem to abate, as any one who follows any serious journal will realise. This is clearly a sign of a new consciousness gripping people all over the world. The book presented here is among the very good contributions to this new consciousness. It is the result of a WCC project started in 1980. The UN Decade on women highlighted the importance of religious teachings regarding women in order to understand their historical and present situation. Taboos have been quite often at least reinforced by, if they did not originate from, religious myths and teachings. This study focuses not so much on the social role of women as on the religious teachings relating to female sexuality and bodily functions which affect the public conception of femaleness (as beneficial, impure, dangerous, unclean...).

Altogether fifteen women contribute to the collection, including Mary Assaad who initiated the project and writes the Introduction, and Bertrice Wood, Moderator of the WCC Working Group, Sub-unit on Women in Church and Society, who writes the Preface. The first two contributions deal with the Jewish tradition, the first concentrating on the Hebrew Bible and early Rabbinic tradition, the second more on the reformed and liberal congregations in various countries, somewhat in conflict with Jewish orthodoxy. Vasudha Narayanan, associate professor of religion at the University of Florida, writes on the Hindu perception,

stressing the concept of auspiciousness in relation to sexuality. She writes with special knowledge of the Tamil tradition and of the all-India brahmanic concepts. Auspiciousness translates a very Hindu category that can be expressed in various words — *subha*, *kalyana*, *mangala*, *sri* — all of which denote the quality of life or *svasti*, largely seen as intramundane but not unrelated to *moksha*. The ideal woman is *sumangali*, one whose husband is alive and so can participate in his activities that lead to the enjoyment of the four goals of life. The ideal proposed is one of absolute fidelity. Bodily functions like menstruation, while celebrated specially in Tamil Nadu, are yet seen as sources of impurity. The role of devadasis and the position of widows, with the vexed problem of *sati*, are also studied in this context.

The next three contributions present the Islamic perceptions, an African understanding (the Akan from Ghana) and the Buddhist teachings as lived in Japan. The last six essays deal with the Christian tradition, two on the Orthodox understanding (one from Romania, the other from France). Maria-Teresa Porcile-Santiso, a theologian from Uruguay, covers the positive side of Roman Catholic teaching reflected in the Church's magisterium. She stresses that the core of this teaching is the option for life and the perfection of love as seen in the Gospel message and the tradition of the Church. She also acknowledges the wide gap between this official teaching and the practice of many Catholics. In a response, Rosemary Radford Reuther brings out "another tradition" where women are not considered equal to men, starting at least from Augustine and consistently present in the Church's position, seen specially in the denial of the office of priesthood to women. Reuther refuses to discuss the theological reasons presented by the magisterium in its teaching on sexuality and sees it as linked to an exaggerated misconception of the role of the bishops in the Church and the result of power and "rigid authoritarianism." She

pleas for a move towards relationality. The Protestant tradition is presented by a study on the Anglican Church in New Zealand and a response from the USA.

The essays are solidly researched, well presented and generally well-focused, although not all are faithful to the purpose of finding out the religious views on female sexuality and female bodily functions. The Indian and the African contributions have a select bibliography besides the footnotes.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

*Restructuring the Common Good. Theology and the Social Order.* By Gary J. DORRIEN. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1990. Pp. xili-221. \$ 16.95 (pbk.). ISBN 0-88344-797-5.

The author's stand could be defined as "democratic socialism." He seeks to interpret the history and theory of modern socialism in the Protestant tradition. He argues that postmodern liberationism must draw from current African-American, feminist, environmentalist and Latin American movements. He understands Christian socialism as a moral and socio-economic vision of democratic empowerment that is instructive for the various contemporary, reformist, populist and liberationist movements. He totally rejects Marxist collectivism and would not admit any compromise on democratic rights for the noblest of reasons or out of respect for the most imperious of historical necessities.

The author discusses the legacy of the Social Gospel according to Walter Rauschenbusch who proposed a biblical vision of social and economic transformation. Instead of admitting inequality because of the omnipresence of evil, he insisted on democratization precisely for that very reason. Next the author takes up the theology of religious socialism according to Paul Tillich. Although this thinker initially did not see the full danger of Nazism, he fought strenuously against totalitarianism when he was alerted to it. With Jurgen Moltmann we have the dialectics of hope implying an

eschatological consciousness. He stresses that Christian hope has a revolutionary orientation. He rejects the sacralization of any particular political ideology. The author then deals with Gustavo Gutierrez and other theologies of liberation wherein we have a new theological method starting from commitment to the poor. This trend is considered important, but it is criticized for not suggesting a concrete model for society. Miguez Bonino particularly comes in for censure for avoiding the issues of centralization of authority, market freedom and political rights. In the last chapter, Dorrien proposes his own vision on "the praxis of the common good." He wants the liberationist option to be taken seriously. In a North American context this would imply commitment of oneself to a social vision that cuts across the cultural boundaries of socialist movements while retaining the fundamental insistence on democratic empowerment.

While the author has many penetrating insights, the work suffers from a too academic or abstract thrust. He is right in stressing the importance of democratic rights, but has not faced the issue of reconciliation between them and basic socio-economic rights. When he says that there should be no compromise with democratic rights, does he mean that freedom of the press implies right to violate the good name of people or stir up sedition? While evaluating events in countries like Nicaragua, he ignores the neo-colonial forces that seek to radicalize revolutions in order to provoke a reaction which leads to repression which in turn ends up by the overthrow of a revolutionary regime. This is what has happened in several countries and is now being attempted in Cuba. The contribution to the common good for a new social order would have been more effective if ways to combat imperialism and neo-colonialism were suggested. The work also suffers from a lack of a clear definition of what is meant by the common good.

George V. LOBO, S.J.

## Liberation

**Faith and the Intifada.** Palestinian Christian Voices. Edited by Naim S. ATEEK et alii. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1992. Pp. xv-207. \$ 13.95 (pbk.). ISBN 0-88344-804-4.

The Jews had always a conviction that the Holy Land was given to their race by Yahweh in perpetuity. Towards the end of the last century liberal Jews were willing to understand the promise in a metaphorical way in line with the universal vision of the restored Israel. However, the rise of anti-semitism in Europe provoked the desire among Zionists of recovering the biblical lands. The Holocaust at the hands of the Nazis gave the final push to the project of military occupation of a part of Palestine as the permanent homeland for the threatened Jews. The British, and later Americans, were only too willing to collaborate in the establishment of a client state that could be a bridgehead to control the Gulf oil territories and even the newly independent countries beyond. So in 1948 they actively helped in dispossessing the Palestinians to make room for the settlement of Jews, especially from Europe. The guilt of the Western countries for the Holocaust and a fundamentalist reading of the Bible by a large section of Christians supported the misadventure which was a catastrophe for the Palestinian people. By its military victory in 1967 Israel extended its frontiers to the whole of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip so that the Palestinians who remained in the area became an occupied people.

Among the displaced and subjugated Palestinians, some are Christians who have lived there from the time of Christ. Their condition is particularly precarious amidst the Jewish occupiers and the Muslim masses. By and large they have joined the Intifada movement of resistance begun in 1987. The present work deals with their anguish and hopes. Part I describes the Palestinian Reality, Part II deals with Palestinian Christian identity, Part III with Power, Justice and

the Bible, Part IV with Women, Faith and the Intifada and Part V with International Responses to the Quest for Palestinian Theology.

We have a graphic picture of the struggle of the Holy Land Christians for survival and their identity amidst the Israeli occupiers and the Muslim Arab masses. Hanan Ashrani, who is the chief Palestinian delegate to the current international conference on the Palestinian problem, makes a lucid, critical analysis of the Intifada. One of the most heartrending problems for the Palestinian Christians is the abuse of their Scriptures by both Jewish and Christian Zionists to defend their persecution. Among the international responses, the most interesting is by Mark Chmiel on Chomsky, Language and Liberation. The author explains very well how language is used to create illusions and prejudices in order to distract well-meaning people, especially in the West, from the true reality of the conflict. The legitimate struggle of an oppressed people is called *terrorism*, their refusal to bow down to humiliation is termed *rejectionism*, and the pretension of negotiations without a will to grant justice is described a *peace process*.

While the discussion is directly about Palestine, there are many reflections that apply also to other situations like Nicaragua, El Salvador and Haiti. A careful reading of the work would uncover the insidious workings of imperialism and neo-colonialism in a large part of the world today. It would also show how a small determined client state can run the foreign policy of the most powerful nation in the world. The work is a must for all those interested in getting a close picture of the Arab-Israeli conflict and similar issues elsewhere. It would open the eyes of Christian fundamentalists who abuse the Bible to defend the injustice created by Zionists.

George V. LOBO, S.J.

**Hope and History. Why We Must Share the Story of the Movement.** By Vincent HARDING. Maryknoll: Orbis Books,

1990. Pp. xlii-230. \$ 9.95.(pbk.). ISBN 0-88344-664-2.

This is the story of the American Civil Rights Movement and is directed at educating the present youth in the struggle for democratic rights for the Blacks. It is placed in the context of similar struggles in South Africa, Eastern Europe and China.

The author proposes thirteen historical examples of freedom fighters among the Blacks in the post World War II movement. He brings alive a host of men and women who have struggled for democracy and freedom. He acknowledges the contribution of such diverse personalities as Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X. While he definitely opts for the non-violent path initiated by Gandhi, he feels that the Black Panthers had also a role to play. Quoting Gandhi who said: "My devotion to truth has drawn me into politics," and the example of the El Salvador martyrs, the author brings out the role of religion in promoting freedom. He specially underscores the creative contribution of the young generation who are often dismissed as irresponsible. While so many educators are seeking methods to instill middle-class values into Negro youth, King remarked that it was precisely when young Blacks threw off these values that they made an historic contribution.

The Black movement has not only benefited their class, but has woken up the Whites to the true implication of democracy by facing all the interclass flaws — racism, poverty, militarism and materialism. There can be no true future for democratic life unless it is shared with all enslaved and exploited people. This holds good also for people overseas as was demonstrated in the crusade against the war in Vietnam. If the American ideal is to be realized it should inspire all the earth's children to find their opportunity, in their own ways, for a new birth of freedom.

The struggle is not only on the political level. Poetry, music and other art forms have an important role to play in

order to realize the capacity for living meaningful lives. As King remarked, the Blacks have "injected a new meaning into the view of history and of civilization." A study of artists and their work can be exciting and fundamental to the creation of a more just and democratic society.

Now that the battle has been fairly won, the author asks whether there are still people who are prepared to take great risks to create a more humane world for children not yet born. Drugs can now be more disastrous to the Black community than segregation and direct racism ever were, especially when drugs are related to violence and are combined with economic and social isolation.

The author also discusses the "geography of freedom" when Black American soldiers are made to fight against liberation movements in non-white countries. He recalls the statement of King urging American rulers to get on the right side of world revolution.

The work ends with a strong note of hope. The American ideal of democracy is still possible and the Blacks have an important role to play in bringing it about. Finally, the author addresses Letters to different categories of teachers. The work is a notable contribution to liberation and social harmony in the United States and the whole world.

George V. LOBO, S.J.

Cut Loose Your Stammering Tongue. Black Theology in the Slave Narratives. Edited by Dwight N. HOPKINS and George C.L. CUMMINS. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991. Pp. xxiii-168. \$ 13.95 (pbk.). ISBN 0-88344-774-6.

This is an effort to develop black theology from the actual voices of the Africans who were brought as slaves to the New World. It relies heavily on forty-one volumes of interviews with former slaves recorded in George P. Rawick's *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography* (1936-38). This massive project was established as one of the means of meeting white-collar unemployment during the depression years! The Slave Narrative



Collection languished for quite some time in the dusty rooms of the Library of Congress. In spite of some questions posed, the editors give proof for the basic authenticity of the narratives.

What comes through the narratives is that the slaves were not simple passive victims of brute white force. On the contrary, their dogged and creative strength fashioned a new black collective self behind the closed doors in the slave quarters or deep in the woods at night. They largely adopted the Christian religion, but developed a new understanding of the faith, not according to the blind obedience which the masters tried to inculcate, but as a liberating covenant of grace. Thus the narratives provide foundational elements for the creation of a black theology of liberation.

The slaves' faith in a liberating God never died even in the face of apparent endless evil. Some did not feel that their enslaved condition was an unmitigated evil. But they never justified the demonic institution of slavery with God's will and purpose for humanity. As they often had to meet secretly, to evade the masters' wrath, to worship God and thus risk their lives to hear His Word in communal settings, we can today appreciate the struggle of the oppressed as a locus for theological reflection.

With this background, the editors themselves write on Slave Theology in the "Invisible Institutes" and the Slave Narrative as a Source Book of Black Theological Discourse. We get a good idea of the understanding of God who hears our cries, of Jesus who dies no more, of humanity created in freedom and a culture of resistance. Will Coleman deals with the experience of the Spirit in the Slave Narratives. A graphic account of the experience of four old people make these reflections come alive. Cheryl J. Sanders draws a Liberation Ethic in the Ex-Slave Interviews. It reveals the indomitable courage of the slaves in resisting the institution of slavery in spite of the temptation to accommodation. Finally, George C.L. Cummings again speaks of

Black Liberation Theology from the Slave Narratives.

By revealing how the enslaved blacks combined their African religions with the Christian faith, this book speaks to all those who are attentive to the voice of Spirit in conditions of oppression and marginalization. It is to be hoped that more studies will come out of the immense treasure of the forty-one volumes of interviews with those who kept their hopes alive in spite of their victimized condition.

George V. LOBO, S.J.

### Pastoral

**Candidates for the Priesthood. A Study of their Suitability according to the New Code of Canon Law.** By Anthony LENDAKADAVIL, S.D.B., Shillong: Vendrame Institute Publications, 1989. Pp. xv-354. Rs 300, \$ 25. ISBN 81-85406-00-9.

The contents of this work are much wider than what the title would suggest. The Church requirements regarding candidates for the priesthood are placed in the background of the historical development of the priesthood, a theological understanding and the pastoral implications. Formation is dealt with rather thoroughly in the context of the suitability of the candidates. Thus the work becomes a comprehensive presentation of discernment and formation of priestly candidates. In no other work in English to date could one find a complete list of official documents concerning this vital subject. We welcome it as a very useful handbook for all those engaged in priestly formation. The seminarians themselves could profit a lot by going through it.

As the work is encyclopedic in nature, one could find this or that shortcoming. Without meaning to make negative criticism, we may point out a few things. The difference between the levitical priesthood of the Old testament and the Christian priesthood should have been brought out more clearly. For this, the role of the Old Testament prophets could

have been discussed. There is too much stress on "accurate formation." The requirements are presented in such a way as to give the image of a bourgeois gentleman which is the bane of the priesthood in recent times. The treatment of celibacy is all too brief. The arguments proposed for restricting the priesthood to the male sex are not so convincing.

It is good that documents are quoted at length in several places. However, the citing of the original texts in Latin, Italian and Spanish could have been dispensed with except for some key passages. Under theological formation, too much stress is laid on content rather than on the mode of theologizing. There is not much trace of contextualized reflection especially in poor countries. Inculturation and social analysis are very inadequately treated. In general, the social documents of the Church, which are so vital in priestly formation, are ignored. Though residence in seminaries is normal according to the present discipline, something could have been said about exposure and even staying with the people for limited periods of time. In spite of these limitations, the author has rendered a valuable service regarding discernment and training candidates for the priesthood.

George V. LOBO, S.J.

*Toward Integral Holism in Psychology.* By Bastin PARANGIMALIL, C.M.I. New Delhi: Inter-India Publications, 1990. Pp. 300. Rs 290. ISBN 81-210-0232-X.

Since its inception as an autonomous discipline, modern psychology was under the strong grip of mechanistic and reductionist influences. At the same time, traditional theology, from the time it deviated from the holistic vision of St Thomas, did not take empirical evidence seriously. This dichotomy had deleterious consequences in personality development and religious education. However, during the last few decades, Church teaching, especially of Pope Pius XII and Vatican II, as well as modern theology have been cognisant of recent psychological insights while psychology itself has

developed along more holistic lines. The latter is particularly true of the "third force" or humanistic psychology. Maslow has been rightly acknowledged as the main votary of this holistic trend. He has tried to synthesize various trends of thought from many religio-philosophical systems of the East and West in a naturalistic and humanistic language.

The author of the present work proposes the construction of a perspective on the human person which is illumined, formed and informed by a sound psychology and theological anthropology. As Dr J. Harold Ellen remarks in the foreword: "Theology which does not take all psychology has to offer on personality theory and anthropological models is neither true to itself, its own task, nor to the world of reality in which it proposes to do its work. Psychology which does not take all that theology has to offer on personality theory and anthropological models is a false psychology which is not true to itself, its own work, or the world of reality it proposes to study and understands" (pp. 8-9).

The author first traces the developments from reductionism in psychology, to psychology in transition and finally to holistic trends in modern psychology. His own synthesis gives special weight to the contribution of Maslow. He appreciates the assumptions of Maslow on human nature: 1) the human is holistic; 2) the human is teleological; 3) the human is creative; 4) the human is a natural, secular reality; 5) the human has rich innate potentialities; 6) the basic nature of the human person is good; 7) the human is an experiential knower; 8) the human person is a model for a holistic science; 8) human relations are therapeutic. Maslow has also proposed a wholesome motivation theory with a hierarchy of needs and a call to self-actualization, although his classification needs to be evaluated.

It may come as a surprise to many to note the author's highly positive evaluation of the Thomistic system which he carefully distinguishes from that of Aristotle. He even criticizes Maslow for fall-

ing short of the Thomistic positions regarding the human personality, for instance, the ontological nature of the human person, the principle of unity in the human person, theocentrism, the importance of religiosity, teleology, qualified optimism, absolute ethical values, human responsibility and incarnated integration.

In an otherwise carefully written book, there are occasional obscurities. For instance, on p. 20 we read: "Thomistic psychology is considered to be one holistic approach. Thomistic psychology is dualistic in outlook." It is hard to make any sense out of this, although it is added: "Its dualism is different from the Cartesian sort."

On the whole, this work is very illuminating. It should be useful particularly to educators and formators. As it is largely historical, it might have helped if the contributions of French and Belgian "pastoral psychologists" were taken into account. We would welcome a complementary volume in which the pastoral conclusions from the author's research are explicitly drawn.

George V. LOBO, S.J.

*Tales of the City of God.* By Carlos G. VALLES, S.J. Anand: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1992, Pp. viii-211. Rs 45. \$ 7.

This is an excellent book containing fifty-six insightful parables and stories, drawn from a repertoire of sources like personal experiences, Indian and exotic cultures, Zen stories, and stories from well-known writers like Tagore, Lie Tzu

and Tony de Mello. It is quite evident that the book draws its inspiration from the writings of the charismatic Tony de Mello.

The stories are narrated in simple verses so that anybody can understand and cherish them. They are complemented by explanatory and meditational prose. The parables and stories are comparatively short and of easy reading. 'Where are you going, dear little bird?' has the distinction of not only being the longest in the book (eleven pages) but also is one of its finest parables. On the other hand, the shortest story, 'Shields and Spears,' is easily accommodated in just one page.

The book has an attractive layout with an uncrowded effect. It is captivating and very useful. Preachers, teachers and others will find in it ready references for adorning sermons, story-telling sessions, prayer services and meditations. Every story in this book drives home an eternal message or a lesson with a telling effect.

Perhaps, the only out that the reader may encounter would be the occasional long drawn out prosaic interruptions which happen to be the reflections of the author. Though the author reproduces a number of well-known stories, especially from the Chinese Lie Tzu and the Indian celebrity Tony de Mello, they are studied with accompanying commentaries, and have a definite appeal.

Francis PERUMALIL, S.J.

# Vidyajyoti

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### Ministry and Mission

#### *Christological Considerations*

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The author is a missiologist based on Bombay (SVD House, Plot 510, 32nd Rd., Bombay 400050). He reflects on the core of Christology and stresses that it must be found in active discipleship, i.e., in assuming a pattern of life as Jesus showed it to us rather than in dogmatic statements about him. The ministry of Jesus is what the Gospels stress and what can renew our Christology. Credal affirmations have only a relative role in respect to a discipleship Christology. Thus this year's long reflections on "mission" in our JOURNAL conclude by focusing on Jesus the Missionary.

**A**loysius Pieris begins his book, *Love Meets Wisdom: A Christian Experience of Buddhism*, with the observation: "It is common knowledge that the West *studies* all the world religions, whereas the East simply *practices* them. Religion is a department in many a Western University, just as it has become a 'department' in life. Among us in the East, however, religion *is* life."<sup>1</sup> In this essay I wish to relate this statement to a missiological context. In the Western Church there is a tendency to identify mission with the proclamation of the "Fullness of the Truth." This in turn has been broken down in terms of various dogmas and doctrines about God, Christ and the Church. However, authentic missionary activity "has but one purpose: to serve man by revealing to him the love of God made manifest in Jesus Christ" (RM 2).

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1. Aloysius PIERIS, *Love Meets Wisdom*, New York, 1988, p. 3.

I have here no intention of developing an Indian Christology. All what I want is to emphasize the fact that in modern times of religious pluralism, the winning characteristic of a religion is the goods it delivers, namely the quality of life that it enables its followers to lead, rather than the doctrines it proclaims. In this context I want to point out that for the Christian, faith in the centrality of the historical person Jesus Christ is not primarily a question of dogmatic expressions to hold, but of the discipleship that one lives in this faith-commitment. In the process certain new contours of Christology may become sharp due to the particular socio-cultural and religious context in which they are expressed.

### Christian Faith is Christocentric

At the very outset it has to be admitted that Christianity is not Christian if it is not Christocentric. For it is precisely the centrality of Christ that makes Christianity what it is, as Thor Hall has pointed out.<sup>2</sup> Christian faith is essentially faith in Christ. This does not mean any kind of Christo-monism, but it has to do with the perspective, not the purview, of Christian faith. Christian faith sees all things through Christ. Christocentricity does not stand over against theocentricity, rather it says that the Christ-event is the key to the understanding of God. Further it also says that this faith is inclusive of all revealed truth, God's Word in any form, from beginning to end (Jn 1:1-18). A Christian considers Christ as the universal agent in all that God says and does.

On the other hand the Christology of the Christian community is historical and contextual. The Christian understanding of Christ is dynamic, it is developed in response to and in the light of the life-situation of the community. That is to say, the Christian community's awareness of the meaning, the implications and the consequences of its Christocentric faith is in touch with the realities of life. The Christocentric theological reflection has evolved and must continue to evolve in every new context. The Christian community has the responsibility for advancing its Christocentric perspective in relation to the context in which it finds itself. It need not parrot-like just repeat the past reflections on Christology. But it must learn the dynamic of reflective method from its ancestors.

Just as the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) made a transition from the Jewish Messiah to a Christ for all the world, and hence the com-

2. Thor HALL, *The Evolution of Christology*, Abingdon, 1982, p. 26.

mitment to Christ remained no longer tied to practices according to the Jewish Law but adapted itself to the new situations, so also a radical inclusive Christology must evolve according to the context of today.

### Jesus is God-centred

The New Testament evidence vouches that Jesus himself is God-centred. For Jesus God is the absolute point of departure, the centre and the goal. His understanding points to a radical theocentrality, as is obvious from the prayer he taught his disciples (Lk 11:2-4). As Rahner has pointed out, Jesus' understanding of God has a certain unity of tension between God's majesty and the nearness of God who is intimately addressed as Abba. The sanctification of God's name takes place in the realization of God's reign, the fulfilling of God's will. This is effective in Jesus himself as he appears in the NT. Those who enter into a relation with God must make a decision regarding Jesus and his activity. He contains the human hope for the absolute future. What we perceive in the life of Jesus is his unity with God (Mk 1:35) and the sense of fellow-humanity as a response to the Divine.<sup>3</sup>

Unlike the Synoptics, where the identity of Jesus is unfolded gradually culminating in Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi (Mk 8:27-30 and par), John begins with an absolute high Christology (Jn 1:1ff). In spite of this descending Christology, throughout the Gospel John presents a picture of Jesus whose identity is to be understood in relation to his mission. The sense of having been sent into the world to reveal the Father lies at the very core of Jesus' consciousness. As part of this sense of mission, Jesus acknowledges that his will is not his own, but that of the Father who sent him (4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 8:29). His is not a grudging submission but a glad embrace of God's will. Jesus feeds on it. It is the root of his communion with the Father. It follows that Jesus' words are not his own, but the Father's.<sup>4</sup> The sent One's mouth is filled with the Sender's words, because his ear hears the Father's words. His speaking depends on his hearing (5:30; 8:26, 40, 47; 15:15). Jesus can speak the words of God, not only because he is at each moment radically attentive to God, but because he knows God (7:28-29; 8:55; 17:25).

3. Karl RAHNER and Wilhelm THUESING, *A New Christology*, London, 1980, pp. 123-24

4. Cf. 7:16-18; 8:28; 12:49; 14:24; 17:18.

In fact Jesus' knowledge is a missionary knowledge to share with others.

Just as his words are not his own but that of the Father whom he reveals, so also his works are not his own but of the Father (4:34; 5:36; 9:4). In fact, the Johannine Christology is a perfect transparency in the sense that Jesus does not draw attention to himself but points to the Father whom he reveals constantly. Jesus is a medium. As the revealer of God, he lets all the light to pass through him. According to John, Jesus' public ministry consists of 'signs' and discourses. The two are expressions of his activity as revealer and are closely connected and reciprocally related.<sup>5</sup>

The Gospel is about Jesus, but Jesus is about God. "John was concerned to confront his readers through Jesus with God," comments Barrett.<sup>6</sup> It is God, whom no one has ever seen, who is seen when people look at Jesus, and heard when they listen to his word. Theme after theme is taken up and set in this light: the figure of Christ himself (14:9); his teaching and his works of compassion (14:10-24); his call of the disciples (17:6); the baptism and the Lord's supper, images such as bread (6:32) and the vine (15:1). Commenting on the Johannine text, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (1:14), George Soares-Prabhu has shown how Jesus is the disclosure of the divine in human history and the real presence of God in material reality. This, Jesus accomplishes through "a concrete human life, lived out in radical self-giving and obedience and service. It is this human life that tells us what God is like (that God is love!) because it is the visible expression, the 'flesh', of the Word that is what God is."<sup>7</sup>

## Jesus' Identity, a Missionary Identity

Often we think of Jesus Christ only on metaphysical terms, i.e., as the second person of the Blessed Trinity. However Jesus himself can be understood only in terms of his vocation and mission, as is often the case with other persons in the Bible. Jesus can be appreci-

5. Cf. Stephen S. SMALLEY, *John: Evangelist and Interpreter*, Exeter, 1979, pp. 87-89, for a description of the Johannine structural arrangements of the words and deeds, revealing the Father.

6. C.K. BARRETT, *The Gospel According to St. John*, London, 1978, p. 97.

7. George SOARES-PRABHU, "The Sacred in the Secular. Reflections on the Johannine Sutra: 'The Word was made Flesh and Dwelt among us' (Jn 1:14)," *Jeevadhara* 18(1987) p. 133.

ated only relationally, in respect to his mission of realizing the reign of his Father.<sup>8</sup> He was so overwhelmingly charged with this call that he had to make the Father known.

The very name "Christ" means one who is anointed for a ministry. In the Old Testament it was a functional term: one was anointed to do something. This gave rise to the expectation of the Messiah (Christ/anointed one) who would free Israel and usher in the divine reign. The divine Sonship of Jesus was not at the centre. "But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you," declares Jesus (Mt 12:27).<sup>9</sup> Similarly speaking about the titles of Jesus, "Christ" and "Son of God," Vellanickal observes that John makes use of the title Son of God almost exclusively in contexts expressing Jesus' mission among the people.<sup>10</sup> "The surest thing we know about Jesus is that he positively would not let people define him, would not let them say who or what he was, before they had grasped the values represented in his words and deeds," observes Segundo.<sup>11</sup>

The centrality of Jesus challenges us to develop a ministry-centred approach to Jesus Christ and our own following of his life. In the past the centrality of Jesus had been almost exclusively interpreted as the centrality of the dogmas about Jesus Christ, which in turn based themselves almost exclusively on the death and resurrection of Jesus. I am of the opinion that the New Testament evidence does not justify such an approach. What we have in the Gospels is rather a description of the ministry of Jesus. Even the death and resurrection of Jesus are a consequence of his ministry, a result of his ministry.

What was for Jesus the first and central aim can be seen clearly in the reasons for his opposition to the Pharisees, the models of piety among the people (Lk 15:1; Mk 2:15-17). The Pharisees criticize Jesus for eating with "sinners," i.e., people whom the Pharisees regarded as excluded from the people of God because they had broken the Law and its interpretation by the rabbis or had collaborated, as tax collectors did, with pagan powers occupying Israel.

8. Cf. Mt 7:21ff; Mk 3:31-35; Lk 8:19-21; Jn 15:14.

9. Cf. also Lk 11:18-15; Mt 11:4ff.

10. Mathew VELLANICKAL, *Studies in the Gospel of John*, Bangalore, 1982, p. 7.

11. Juan Luis SEGUNDO, *The Historical Jesus of the Synoptics*, Orbis, 1985, p. 16.



By eating with tax collectors and sinners Jesus accepted them into his community, something abominable to his critics. With a meticulous sense of purity, they kept themselves off from all who did not know the Law or did not keep it. The prophet from Nazareth destroyed this religious structure by tearing down the wall separating the just from the sinners, and this proved to be a stumbling block for the Pharisees. "The fatal antithesis between Jesus and the Pharisees can be seen most sharply in this light."<sup>12</sup> Jesus' active life demonstrated a fundamental denial of the religious principle of separation. Jesus wanted to extend God's mercy to all humankind. This is demonstrated in his prologue quotation of Isaiah 61:1-2 in Lk 4:18-21: he has to proclaim and to take to all people the mercy of God. The drift between Jesus and the Pharisees is based on their respective image of God. As is seen from Lk 18:9-14, the Pharisee made himself God's partner and expected a return from God in response to his own achievement. He wants to tie God down to the plan that he thinks he has come to possess from the Torah.

Jesus accused the Pharisees of a gulf between what they said and what they did (Mt 23:1ff). They claimed that they carried out the law of God in its minute details, while failing to carry out the real will of God. They could not tolerate God acting beyond their interpretation of the Torah. They could not tolerate the all-inclusive mercy of God. Mortimer Arias has shown that what angered the Pharisees at the Galilean Synagogue in Lk 4:23ff was Jesus' deliberate omission of one clause from Is 61:2, "the day of vengeance to the gentiles," and the insertion in its place of another clause from Is 58:6, "to set at liberty the oppressed."<sup>13</sup> In their attitude of self-righteousness, they refuse to accept the all-inclusive mercy of God, the characteristic of the Kingdom as it is realised in Jesus. Jesus' concern was that God's real will be done (Cf. Mt 21:31). For Jesus there is unity of love of God and love of neighbour. The Pharisees with their legalistic interpretation, saw the cultic worship, divorced of fellow-humanity, as the sole criterion. The Sadducees too failed to see this connection of one's relation with God and the fellow-humanity. This in turn led to the friction between Jesus and the Jewish authorities which ultimately led to his crucifixion and death. The resurrection of Jesus was the vindication, so to say, by the Father, of

12. RAHNER and THUESING, *ibid.*, p. 128.

13. Mortimer ARIAS, "Mission and Liberation," IRM 63(1984) p. 44.

Jesus' ministry (Acts 2:24). Jesus himself was ministry-centred both according to the synoptics as well as according to John.

### Disciples Sent to Continue the Ministry

In the Synoptics Jesus, having made the announcement of his mission in Galilee (Mk 1:9-14), continues to fulfill it by the call of the first disciples to follow him and to share in his mission (Mk 3:13). Thus the first actions of Jesus are related to each other: the announcement of the Good News and the gathering of the first disciples. The disciples are called to be with him so that they can be sent out to execute his very same mission (Mk 3:14; cf. Mk 1:39). They are called to be witnesses of Jesus' life and co-workers in his mission. There is a historico-theological continuity between Jesus and the disciples: "By means of his literary composition Mark builds an arch which spans over the call of the first disciples (1:16-20) to the meeting again with the Risen Christ, and rests in the middle on twin pillars of the appointment of the Twelve (3:13-19) and their mission (6:7-13)," comments Eloy Sanchez.<sup>14</sup> The evangelist inaugurates the vocation process of his disciples as witnesses and co-workers. The call is to "follow" him, to be inserted into his mission.<sup>15</sup> Ernest Best has shown how "listen" and "follow" mean the same thing and they refer to discipleship.<sup>16</sup>

At the culmination of this ministry of revealing the Father, Jesus sends out his disciples with the same mission: "As the Father has sent me, so do I send you" (Jn 20:21, 17:18). Here we have the transition from the life of Jesus to the history of the Church, something which Luke expressed through the separation of his two books. The Father's sending of the Son serves both as the model and as the ground for the Son's sending of the disciples. They have to continue the Son's mission of revealing the Father, realising God's reign.

Jesus sent his disciples to continue his mission of realising the Divine Reign. Christianity is not a set of ideas but a celebration, an actualization, of a historical event, viz., God's self-manifestation and the response to it, made visible in Jesus Christ. Jesus called others

14. Eloy SANCHEZ ROMAN, "Follow Me: How Jesus Calls a Disciple (Mk 1:16-20)," in *Images of Jesus*, Fritzleo LENTZEN-DEIS (ed.), Bombay, 1989, p. 85.

15. "To Follow" is found 18 times in Mark of which 17 times it is used with the meaning of following Jesus. Cf. SANCHEZ, *Ibid.*, p. 177.

16. Ernest BEST, *Following Jesus, Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark*, Sheffield, 1981, pp. 57-58.

as participants and collaborators of his ministry (Lk 10:1; Mk 3:14; Mt 10:7-8; Jn 20:21). Christianity is not primarily a question of believing and professing but living. We can believe and profess many things which would not make any difference to the context or may even become object of derision for a later generation.<sup>17</sup> Even theological jargon like "fulfillment," "ordinary ways," "anonymous Christians," etc., can serve no meaningful purpose for the authentic ministry to which Christians are called nor can this jargon dispense them of their ministry. What we need today more than ever is a Christology of verbs, what Jesus Christ did, rather than a Christology of nouns and adjectives, i.e., what he was.

To be a witness does not primarily mean the verbal proclamation of one's faith, but following the person of Jesus. The Kingdom he announced is his own person, and the realisation of the Kingdom is the following of his life-style by his disciples. Every vocation implies the struggle for the realisation of the Kingdom. It asks us to be fellow-travellers with Jesus. The only way to know Jesus is to follow his pattern of life. In that the disciples come to learn the Master. In fact the Markan Gospel in particular is a handbook of the discipleship which describes the call and the initiation of the Twelve into discipleship by introducing them to Jesus' mission and his life of suffering and service.<sup>18</sup> The qualification for the one who is to replace Judas that Peter sets is that he must be one who had been with the Lord all through Jesus' ministry beginning with his baptism (Acts 1:21-22).

The disciples have to make it possible for others to experience God as Jesus experienced God and as Jesus revealed that experience. According to Mt 5:16, for instance, they are asked to shine before people "that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." In the parable of the prodigal son (Lk 15:25ff), the elder brother is an example as to how this experience can be blocked. The disciples are to be open to the will of God so

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17. Thus the Council of Florence (1438-45) solemnly declared: "The holy Roman Church believes professes and proclaims that none of these who are outside the Church — not only pagans, but Jews also, heretics, and schismatics — can have part in eternal life but will go to the eternal fire." J. NEUNER and J. DUPUIS (eds.), *The Christian Faith*, Bangalore, 1973, p. 265). Less than 500 years later Vatican II asserted: "Those also can attain everlasting salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God . . ." (*Lumen Gentium*, 16).

18. Cf. Carlo MARTINI, *L'Itinerario Spirituale dei Dodici nel Vangelo di Marco*, Roma, 1980, p.5.

that they would hand on God's mercy (cf. Mt 5:20-48). Just as the Kingdom of God was made present in Jesus' person and activity, so also the disciples' attitudes and actions must contribute to the realization of the Kingdom. Jesus' consciousness of 'having been sent' is oriented to the consciousness of his mission of realizing the Kingdom (Lk 4:17ff).

The historical person Jesus of Nazareth must be the primary standard for a Christian. In the New Testament, particularly in the Gospels, we have seen how Jesus points always to God. Jesus shows us the way and we are on the way in so far as we follow him. Jesus is the one who accomplished the way. The way is what Jesus taught that must be done. Jesus lived to give glory to God and as a result God glorified Jesus. Jesus did not proclaim himself, but his person and life made God known. To find God is to follow the way of Jesus, observes G. Kelly.<sup>19</sup>

We have come to accept that Jesus is the centre of our history because in him we find all Truth. But we have developed this further with all sorts of exclusivistic dogmas often reducing our neighbours in faith to having merely a desire for a divine encounter, in spite of evidence of mystical prayer and meditation among them. Or we have condescendingly bestowed upon them the status of crypto-Christians. The question is: Have these dogmas in any way helped in the realisation of the divine reign, the central message of Jesus Christ? In some cases they have rather been an obstacle even if it has to be admitted that dogmatic formulations can have a service-role expressing the faith-experience.

Often our 'Christian' vision is too narrow and we reduce the mission and reality of Christ to the level of what we have understood him to be. Rather than expanding "the Way, the Truth and the Life" as he who enlightens every human being coming into the world, and thus seeing the whole of history as the universal outreach of the Divine, the Divine reaching out to humanity, we have reduced the saving Reality to its historical expression in Jesus of Nazareth. Even though it has to be admitted that Christian faith says that in Jesus of Nazareth we have the perfect revelation of the Divine nature in God's relation to humanity, and that this Jesus of Nazareth is the incarnation of God's Reality, the saving Reality and its mission is not limited to the historical person Jesus. Jesus, as we

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19. Cf. Joseph G. KELLY, "Lucan Christology and the Jewish Christian Dialogue," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 21/4 (1984), p. 693.

said, is the perfect revelation of the Divine to humans and the perfect response of the humans to the Divine self-offer. He exemplifies the Divine Reign. He "was anointed by the Holy Spirit and he went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him," as Peter summarizes the ministry of Jesus (Acts 10:38).

The uniqueness of Jesus Christ has become a key issue of discussion especially in the Western missiological circles. The fact of religious pluralism has created a sense of threat under which thinkers feel obliged to save the Christian faith by defending Jesus Christ! But is it necessary? The dispute over the uniqueness of Jesus Christ smacks of pusillanimity and tribal mentality. The Christian faith says that the Word that was from the beginning and created all things, and enlightens all human beings coming into the world, became flesh and dwelt among us (Jn 1:1-14). This faith tells us that all religious values have a common source, which Christian tradition names the Logos/Christ.

The Christian is called is to make Jesus Christ the centre of his/her life by following his life and thereby making God's love present for the people of our space and time that they may be converted to this Divine Presence.

In the Indian religious scene there are two leading factors: on the one hand there is a sense of the Mystery. On the other hand there is also a rejection of an exclusive claim of any religious tradition as far as ultimate truths are concerned. The sense of Mystery is the ontological basis for tolerance, as S.J. Samartha has observed.<sup>20</sup> Our Christology must leave sufficient theological elbow-room for Christians to live with followers of other faiths without sacrificing the authentic New Testament evidence.

Christ is the sign of communion, not of division and dissipation. Our faith in Jesus Christ as the fullest revelation of God possible for human beings (*Redemptoris Missio* 6) is not so much a claim to be made at the expense of other religions but a mission, a commitment to live that revelation in our own personal life. Thus our faith in the centrality of Jesus should not drive us to condemn others out of a sense of superiority but must move us to lose ourselves in service, to reveal them (and ourselves) of the divine presence among human beings, to become conscious of the "God who dwells among

20. J. SAMARTHA, *One Christ, Many Religions, Toward a Revised Christology*, Maryknoll, 1991, p. 83.

us" (Jn 1:14). This type of mission is neither offensive nor distant to others. Our commitment to Christ does not involve that we save him from other religions or other saviours. Jesus Christ will take care of himself! What we are asked to do is to live his life, to follow him. As Samartha writes, "Christian identity has been distorted by emphasizing a Christology from above and getting it mixed up with dogmas about his person and doctrines about his work."<sup>21</sup> What appeals to an average Indian is not so much the dogmas about Christ, but the person of Jesus of Nazareth, his life and work, words and deeds, his sufferings, death and resurrection. This must be ever actualized in the lives of Christians, not necessarily through sophisticated and carefully worded dogmas. What I am suggesting is that the Church has to become a contrast society that fulfills its mission through presence and attraction, the corner stone of an oriental misiology. This is something congenial to the Indian tradition too. The Gospel is not "something" to be believed, rather it is a way of life, a message to transform life. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus gave a perfect paradigm for mission and asked us to "go and do likewise" (Lk 10:37).

Discipleship is a well understood religious expression in India. All religious leaders, ancient and modern, attracted and attract disciples. In fact the religious maturity of a person is to be gauged by the fact if he/she can draw disciples. The very name Sikhism is a derivative of 'sisya' — disciple. Many renowned Hindus, including Gandhi, considered themselves as disciples of Jesus Christ in their own ways.<sup>22</sup>

A Christology that is blind to the sufferings of the Indian masses cannot be faithful to the Jesus of the Bible. In the midst of the struggles of the millions of India to recover their human identity and dignity, our Christology will be characterized by its prophetic role that will offer hope for the hopeless, that will be a source of courage for the present and inspiration for the future. What do the poor care for the niceties of a Nicaean or a Chalcedonian Christology when survival itself is a luxury for them! What they need is the Jesus who actualized the concreteness and this-worldly dimension of the acceptable year of the Lord (Lk 4:21), who can bring about the biblical Jubilee in their own immediate social and eco-

21. Cf. SAMARTHA, *ibid.*, p. 118.

22. Cf. Jacob KAVUNKAL, 'Jubilee, the Framework of Evangelization,' *Vidyajyoti*, April 1988, pp. 181-191.

nomie circles.<sup>23</sup> Through his disciples, the poor of India must experience a Jesus who put forth his power to heal and to feed. Thus Christology becomes a process of participation and a process of doing.<sup>24</sup>

## Concluding Remarks

In every religion there is the experience of a "Mystery" described differently. Christian faith enables us to see this as the fruit of a divine revelation. Each religion is the response to this experience of the divine, though each religion may perceive this in different degrees and may even respond differently. However each religion has its place and role in salvation history for God is the Creator of all and the Lord of history, leading all to their destiny and fulfillment in Him.

In the Gospels Jesus stands in continuation with this general revelation in so far as he is the Word through whom God created everything and who enlightens every human being (Jn 1:1-9). Jesus' own identity is relational, in relation to his Father and in relation to his ministry of making him known. Thus Jesus is ministry-centred, his aim being to realise the reign of his Father. This ministry in turn led him to his death and resurrection. The cross is the paradigm of a two-fold love: God's love for humans and the human response to that love. Jesus was Word made Flesh and Flesh made Word.

The community of his disciples are sent to continue that ministry of making the divine presence actual and challenging people to respond to the divine in their personal and social life. Jesus' person and life are to be seen as the revelation of God's being-in-relation to the world. Jesus is the pattern of a true humanity, in so far as he was the perfect response to the divine self-offer. Jesus' life is seen as the most sublime example of authentically humanizing life. Active love for those whom he called "the least of my brethren" is shown by Jesus to be the criterion of the final judgment (Mt 25), not any particular profession of doctrines and dogmas, in spite of their relevance and role in human situations. Thus in the final analysis the distinguishing characteristic of Christian faith is the ministry of Jesus which a Christian must re-enact in his/her own life.

23. Cf. Hans STAFFNER, *The Significance of Jesus Christ in Asia*, Anand, 1985.

24. Cf. George SOARES-PRABHU, "The Spirituality of Jesus as a Spirituality of Solidarity and Struggle," in *Liberative Struggles in a Violent Society* (A Forum Publication), Hyderabad, 1990, pp. 135-164.

## **The Magnificat: A Hymn of Liberation.**

**John CHATHANATT, S.J.**

**And Mary said:**

**"My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,  
for he has regarded the low estate of  
his handmaiden.  
For behold, henceforth all generations  
will call me blessed;  
for he who is mighty has done great  
things for me  
and holy is his name.  
And his mercy is on those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with his arm,  
he has scattered the proud in the  
imagination of their hearts,  
he has put down the mighty from their thrones  
and exalted those of low degree;  
he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich he has sent empty away.  
He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
as he spoke to our fathers,**



to Abraham and to his posterity for ever." (Lk 1: 46-55)

I propose to look at the Magnificat as a hymn of liberation. In the process I would like to look at two other magnificats, as it were, one from an adolescent girl of sixteen, and the other from Tagore.

Although a few old manuscripts attribute the hymn to Elizabeth, it is clear that for Luke it comes from the mouth of Mary. Mary's Magnificat represents her pursuit of God and God's pursuit of us through the intricate web of our conflict-ridden, painful yet hopeful historical existence and could well be called a hymn of liberation, or hymn for liberative transformation.

The hymn echoes Hannah's song as given in the First Book of Samuel (1 Sam 2:1-10):

Hannah also prayed and said:

"My heart exults in the LORD,  
my strength is exalted in the LORD.  
My mouth derides my enemies,  
because I rejoice in thy salvation.  
There is none holy like the LORD  
there is none besides thee;  
there is no rock like our God.  
Talk no more so very proudly,  
let not arrogance come from your mouth;  
for the LORD is a God of knowledge,  
and by him actions are weighed.  
The bows of the mighty are broken,  
but the feeble gird on strength,  
Those who were full have hired  
themselves out for bread,  
but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger.  
The barren has borne seven,  
but she who has many children is forlorn.  
The LORD kills and brings to life;  
he brings down to Sheol and raises up.  
The LORD makes poor and makes rich;  
he brings low, he also exalts.  
He raises up the poor from the dust;

he lifts the needy from the ash heap,  
to make them sit with princes and  
inherit a seat of honour.

For the pillars of the earth are the LORD's,  
and on them he has set the world.

He will guard the feet of his faithful ones;  
but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness;  
for not by might shall a man prevail.

The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces;  
against them he will thunder in heaven.

The Lord will judge the ends of the earth;  
he will give strength to his king,  
and exalt the power of his anointed."

Mary's hymn echoes the liberative tone of Hannah's prayer. Standing face to face with the Divine, who has touched the inner core of her mystery, the mystery of the most sacred gift that she has received as a woman, to give life, Mary finds meaning, peace, strength, and courage to live, to act and to endure.

There is a personal as well as social aspect in Mary's Magnificat. The first part is a personal thanksgiving. Standing face to face with that Almighty who has worked a marvelous deed for her, who has graced the core of her mystery as a woman, Mary gives thanks to that God. She reflects upon "the great things" which the Almighty has done for her, the experience of the Annunciation. In God's presence she sings with joy of her experience of His saving work. God has looked upon her with a look of unspeakable love. She identifies herself with the "poor of the Lord," those who wait upon the Lord. She sees what the Lord has done for her as the sign of salvation, which will be marked by God's saving action for the poor. She goes back to her personal experience, "for the mighty (one) has done great things for me", and pauses for a prayer of deep adoration, "Holy is his name."

She is the model of faith who believed what was spoken from the Lord. Though she is lowly, God can work wonders through her. Because she is receptive of God and His grace, the Almighty can work marvellous things through her. Being open to God's entry in to her life she has a special understanding of the very nature of God. This God scatters the proud, but exalts the lowly, remembering his promises.

In the social realm she sees the establishment of the Kingdom. All the promises of the prophets are seen to be fulfilled as a new system of values, creating a new order, establishing a new relationship. In her prayer she sees in the very sinful, broken, conflict-ridden state of the world, the seed of its liberative salvation.

Here is another hymn of liberation, another Magnificat of an adolescent girl, Gitanjali by name, 16 years old, born in Meerut on June 12, 1961, who died of cancer in Bombay on August 11, 1977:

"I trust Thee,  
Yet  
Though you have  
Betrayed my trust  
And refused me,  
All I yearn for ....  
But dear God....  
Isn't it amazing  
For I trust you  
Still?"

Resplendent with the beauty of innocence, arguing, perhaps Job-like, with the Master himself, she is telling us how to live with hurt; she is revealing to us how to live with continued faith in God who seems to hide his face occasionally, perhaps most of the time.

Turning her short life into an everlasting song, she shows to us that life is precious and a thing of beauty. Enshrined in a faith that is deepened and purified by agonizing moments and illumined by the acceptance of that agony, this life, indeed, is a wonderful mystery! "You have betrayed me," she says to God face to face; she has the courage to tell this to God as a friend, as her beloved. But in a moment trust becomes her basic attitude. Despite her clamour of sorrows, "I trust you still." Despite her feeling of God's betrayal, she places her confidence in God. Gitanjali fashions her Magnificent wrestling with herself, wrestling with God. Without knowing the details of the design of the Almighty, who has done marvellous things for her, Mary had sung her Magnificat; knowing very well what the Almighty has gifted her with, Gitanjali hums hers.

Here is yet another Magnificat sung by our poet Tagore:

"I boasted among men that I had known you. They  
see your pictures in all works of mine. They come

and ask me, 'Who is he?' I know not how to answer them. I say, 'Indeed, I cannot tell.' They blame me and they go away in scorn. And you sit there smiling.

I put my tales of you into lasting songs. The secret gushes out from my heart. They come and ask me, 'Tell me all your meanings.' I know not how to answer them. I say, 'Ah, who knows what they mean!' They smile and go away in utter scorn. And you sit there smiling."

Tagore talks of the "lila" of God. In our simplicity, perhaps even anger, we might deny our God — or "kill" Him at times. But "You sit there smiling." The smiling presence of Tagore's God, the arguing mood of Gitanjali and the faith-filled submission of Mary — all these reveal the fundamental character of God. No matter what mood we are in — sorrow or joy, doubt or suspicion, anger or bitterness, hesitation or blurred vision — He is just there listening to the complaints, smiling at our childishness. Watching the fun of all our moods, he "sits there smiling."

In all the three cases what we see is our pursuit of God and God's pursuit of us in our conflict-ridden, tangled, muddled and muddled, historical existence. These hymns leave us a little bit dislocated, renamed, graced, and equipped to face the world of human history, to build the future, and to experience the Kingdom in bits and pieces. Standing face to face with that Divine, all three converse with God, praising, arguing, questioning, or glorifying.

At the sight of Krishna's cosmic form, carrying creation in his body, shining with the light of thousand suns, wonderful and terrible, overcome with fear, astonishment, rapture, devotion and praise, Arjuna prayed:

"I bow before thee, I prostrate  
in adoration, and I beg thy grace  
O Gracious Lord!  
As a father to his son,  
as a friend to his friend,  
as a lover to his beloved,  
Thou, O Lord, should bear with me."

Yes, surely, such childish murmurings would make Him smile all the more.

God has not finished with us yet! And none of us would like to remain as half finished products either. Each one of us has to sing our own hymn of liberative transformation, our own Magnificats. What form is mine going to take — silence, prayer, questioning, searching, a story, a parable, angry words, expression of agony, frustrated outbursts, helplessness, hope against hope, an abandoned look? What is going to be its content? What form it takes is not that important; but that it takes a form is important, perhaps very important.

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## Correspondence

### Celibacy and Marriage

Sir,

I was intrigued by a small item in the letter of Fr Carlos de Melo (VJTR, Oct. '92, pp. 552ff). He says that "the advisability of ordaining married men" is among the "points that are being discussed by the highest authorities in the Church."

If this is true, it is good news indeed; but more precise information would be helpful. Two years ago, I was present at the Synod of Bishops that dealt with the preparation of candidates for the priesthood. The highest authorities in the Church were there; but the ordination of married men was not discussed and attempts to raise the issue were ignored.

So there is a general impression that the subject is taboo, though the urgent need to open up the question is keenly felt at the base.

Faternally,

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Parmananda R. DIVARKAR, S.J.

## Note

### Learning the art of Interfaith Dialogue with Muslims

Today Muslims are found in all countries of the East and West. Many of us seem to think that it is almost impossible to dialogue with them because of their fundamentalist and fanatical attitude. We forget not only that they are seeking God as fellow human beings, but also that they have contributed a great deal to the art and music of many countries, including India. The last 1992 issue of the quarterly *Salaam* of the Islamic Studies Association shows this through various articles. It initiates us into the art of dialoguing with Muslims, emphasising especially their Sufi mystical tradition which appeals to many Christians and post-Christian Westerners, as well as to Hindus. I was introduced by a Spanish friend to the great spiritual master Maneri.<sup>1</sup> Erwin Schoenstein, OFM, writing from the Philippines in *Salaam* tells us how within a few short years after his arrival there he had picked up many prejudices against Muslims: they were cruel, violent, not to be trusted, etc. — many negative things. But later, living in a small town of the south where 97% of the population is Muslim, he discovered that he was mistaken. He gives as the secret of his discovery and success the inspiration of St Francis. When the whole Catholic Church was busy with the Crusades, Francis went to the Sultan of Egypt, Malik-al-Kamil, in a spirit of brotherly love and unarmed, thus opening the way to a relationship of good will and mutual respect between Christians and Muslims.

Fr Schoenstein mentions some concrete points I would like to underline. I have found these imperatives helpful in my relationship

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1. See Paul Jackson's translation, *Letters from Maneri Sufi Saint of Medieval India*, Horizon India Books, (C-52 Nizamuddin East, New Delhi 110013) 1990. pp.458, Rs. 395.

with Hindu friends, living as I do in a village of the Himalayas where we are the only Christians, and in an Ashram where Hindu-Christian dialogue forms something natural and inevitable. He says:

- *We live in the midst of Muslims.*
- *We treat our Muslim neighbours with respect.*
- *We listen to them in order to learn their experience of God.*
- *We share our faith with them when they ask questions.*

The secret of this Franciscan's success and discovery of how even Muslim "would want a dialogue of life and faith" lies in those four points. They also it also brings out the secret of *our* frequent failure in dialogue:

- because we do not dialogue through life, and living with them, but often only through cerebral contacts at the doctrinal/theological level;

- because we allow our prejudices, most often due to *ignorance*, to overshadow our *respect* for other people's faiths and feel superior to them thinking we alone have the whole truth;

- because we are more *eager to speak* than to listen; more anxious to *teach* than to learn; more keen on theologising than seeking *God-experience* and the means for *Sadhana* that can help one towards it;

- because we do not have patience to wait *till they ask questions* regarding our own faith: our apostolic zeal for evangelisation is too much with us and obstructs our capacity to dialogue.

I pray that we may begin to be humble, humble enough to ask God's forgiveness for our past arrogance, the way the Pope did at Assisi, humble enough to want to learn from others "in the Name of God, most gracious, most merciful."

VANDANA, r.s.c.j.

## India Christian Handbook

Work is underway on a comprehensive single-reference volume on Christianity in India, the *India Christian Handbook*. Under the editorship of Dr Saphir P. Athyal, former Principal of Union Biblical Seminary, the Handbook will hopefully be released in early 1994.

"The *India Christian Handbook* will be a ready reference of detailed information regarding churches and institutions," states Rev. K. LungMuana, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches in India. He also serves on the Editorial Council, the *Handbook's* advisory body. The seventeen members of the Council represent most of India's major denominations and all-India Christian organisations.

The *India Christian Handbook* will focus on the present state of the Church and the challenges it faces today. It intends to provide a directory of all Christian organisations and churches — Protestant, including conciliar and evangelical, Orthodox, and Roman Catholic. The goal is to stimulate evaluation in the Church, build networks, and use limited resources effectively.

"Our intent is that the *Handbook* should be detailed, inclusive, and missiological," says Dr. Athyal. The final product will clearly and graphically present the results of a systematic research project."

Research has already commenced. Thirty-one state and regional researchers are based in the 25 States and 7 Union Territories of India. These researchers have collected the addresses of a broad range of churches and distinctively Christian organisations throughout India — organisations involved in various aspects of ministry such as accomodation, education, evangelism, justice, literature, media, missions, service, and welfare.

Surveys have been mailed to these organisations and will be mailed to others as addresses are collected or sent to *ICH* headquarters in Pune.

The staff of the *Handbook* includes 31 part-time researchers, two regional coordinators, and five central staff based in Pune. For more information, contact *India Christian Handbook*, P.O.Box 1426, Bibve-wadi, Pune 411 037, Maharashtra, Phone: 0212-425382, Fax: 0212-436451.



## Review Article

### Hermeneutics for Today

P. MEAGHER, S.J.

One of the features of modern biblical research and interpretation is the concern for and evaluation of the methods used in the search for the *author meaning* of the texts and the meaning of the texts for today. Clarity in methodology and an evaluation of methods is important because of the variety of ways the significance of biblical texts is proposed in the theologies and spiritualities which are, or claim to be, ways to understand the Christian message based on the normative authority of Scripture.

We shall survey here a number of recent publications which expose and/or evaluate today's methodologies and we shall also comment upon their hermeneutics. By hermeneutics we mean the process by which the text is interpreted and made a living and authoritative word for today. The Historical Critical Method (HCM) is called into question in various ways. However, most authors indicate from different perspectives how important, even if partial and at times dangerous, is the role of the rigorous approach of the historical methodology, since God has disclosed himself within human history and through a human form of literary communication.

We begin with a fine description and critical appraisal of the various elements of the HCM and more recent methodologies namely Structuralism, Canonical Criticism (Childs) and Rhetorical Criticism,<sup>1</sup> as applied to the NT, by C. Tuckett.<sup>1</sup>

Tuckett writes with clarity, succinctness, competence and fairness for advanced students of the NT who have done some semesters of basic biblical studies or are acquainted with modern biblical research. Having explained how the Canon arose and given a balanced description of its normative role within the Christian community, he covers all the areas of

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1. *Reading the New Testament. Methods of Interpretation*, By Christopher TUCKETT, London, SPCK, 1987. Pp. viii-200. \$ 6.95. ISBN 0-281-04259-4.

HCM. Prior to this he deals with textual criticism. The first area strictly related to the HCM is the content, scope and value of the topics covered in normal NT Introductions. The subsequent chapters handle Genre, Source Criticism, Form Criticism, and Redaction Criticism.

Moving beyond the HCM perspective Tuckett describes and critiques the sociological approach, concretely distinguishing the aspects of Social Description and Sociological Explanation. Accepting the value of the recent explicit emphasis on the social dimension in the production of texts, reflected in the texts themselves, he correctly indicates that this is an integral part of the HCM. He is more hesitant and critical about the way modern sociological theories are applied to the NT and its society.

In his appraisal of Canonical Criticism and Literary Criticism he shows convincingly that both depend on the HCM, and brings out the value and weaknesses of each approach. He critiques the approach to the NT/Gospels as "literature" and the eagerness of some interpreters to cut the text off from the intentions of the original authors and give it a freedom of its own. The "fictional" character of "literature" and the inherent power of the text to evoke a variety of interpretations are surely part of the author's intentionality. However, can all the canons of modern literary criticism be applied to the NT (religious texts) in the same way, especially when a "normative" interpretation, in homiletics, theology . . . is in question?

I missed a study of Liberation Hermeneutics and of how the word analyzed by means of the HCM becomes the *Living Word of God* in Christian life through homiletics, theology, catechesis .... There are some suggestions for Further Reading and valuable footnotes.

This book is a very competent description of the main elements of the HCM and the other methodologies. Its real value is the critical assessment of the methods presented. The strength and weakness or limits of HCM are boldly and clearly stated and yet the author rightly, in my opinion, defends the HCM as "an integral part of New Testament study, whether such study is undertaken from a purely historical point of view or from a more religious standpoint which accepts the text studied as in some sense foundational for religious faith" (181). The NT cannot be severed from its historical origins. The other methods do not really answer the pressing problem of how to bridge the gap between what the NT meant and what it signifies today nor spell out the factors which control an authentic contemporary interpretation. The HCM is valuable for only a part of the interpretative process.

There a number of other recent Introductions, and one of them is written with India within the purview of the author, D.J. Adams.<sup>2</sup> Though written prior to 1976 (as we assume from the bibliography) for a Chinese

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2. *Biblical Hermeneutics. An Introduction.* By Daniel J. ADAMS, Madras, CLS, (for Indian Theological Library), 2nd rev. ed., 1987. Pp. xiv-164. Rs 25.

Christian readership, revised for an Indian readership soon after 1976 (the latest bibliographic entry) and published after a long delay (1987), yet this book will serve well for another ten years as a text book for theological students and offer valuable reading for pastors and teachers of religion. What recommends this study are its quality and the price. Theological students will need to supplement the study in India with more detailed and recent works on "responsible interpretation" (12) which reflect works of Indian theologians, for example S. Rayan, M. Amaladoss, G. Soares-Prabhu, A. Pileris (Sri Lanka), Felix Wilfred . . . (to mention only a few Catholic writers) and include the hermeneutics of liberation theology omitted in this work.

After three initial and brief chapters, which could have been amalgamated (basic description, principles and rules), the author surveys the history and 'schools' of interpretation: a. Biblical hermeneutics from the earliest Church to this century; b. Major modern writers (Barth, Bultmann, Tillich); c. The new hermeneutic; d. Conservative Protestant hermeneutics; and e. Roman Catholic hermeneutics (Lehmann, Rahner, Congar, Kung). These are informative and fair descriptions and evaluations. The reader will note that the title is more restrictive than the content as Adams does not restrict himself really to biblical hermeneutics, though this is his major concern.

The following chapter, "Toward an Asian Hermeneutics," though illustrated by Kitamori (Japanese), Koyama (a Japanese in Thailand) and Nacpil (Philippines), is applicable to all Asian countries. Though he is a European, the author's years in China enable him to write with insight and some authority.

What makes this a good textbook is its fairness to various authors and traditions, the quantity of information made available, the flexible diversity of its descriptions of interpretation, the insistence on the scientific character, its culturally and historically diverse expressions and the need of personal involvement. There are quite a number of printing errors and the language is too sexist for 1989. On p. 137 we missed the mention of *Vidyajyoti* among the Journals available to Asian/Indian readers.

An Introduction to interpretative methodologies for beginners grew out of a series of lectures for educators, preachers and other people with pastoral responsibilities (I presume the audience was Catholic). It is presented by T.J. Keegan.<sup>3</sup> The reader is introduced to three more recent approaches, *synchronic* in nature ("with time," or concerned with the given text as intelligible here and now and not in its evolution [*diachronic* — "through time"]), namely Structuralism (S), Reader-Response Criticism (RRC) and Canonical Criticism (CC). There is a constant comparison with and belittling (I think this is not too strong a word) of the role and value of HCM

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3. *Interpreting The Bible. A Popular Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics.* By Terence J. KEEGAN O.P. New York/Mahwah, Paulist Press, 1985. Pp. vii-177. \$ 8.95. ISBN 0-8091-2747-4.

(diachronic) which in my opinion is not described as fairly as by Tuckett or in the more realistic book of Brown upon which we shall comment below.

The introductory chapters treat of the nature and role of biblical criticism, its history and the general division between diachronic and synchronic methods. Two important points are underlined, namely that the Scripture text itself, alive within the believing community, has a preeminent place as God's Word; and second, that the Word belongs to the believing community which has the potential to understand it and be nourished by it. The critics' roles have to be at the service to this community, assisting it to understand the Word and not usurping the rights and role of the believer. Keegan uses as a comparison the role of art and literary critics. The final chapter indicates the contribution of RRC and CC to the questions of canonicity and inspiration. Each chapter has a suggested reading list. An index and a very useful glossary of technical terms are added. The author uses the technical terms of secular literary criticism in his descriptions of the methods. The table of contents is given in detail and is a good guide to the contents.

The description of S with examples (The Good Samaritan and Mark's Passion) is well done. The author outlines the basic presuppositions concerning surface structures, then the deep structures and the universally common innate structuring capacity of the human person which comes to expression in kinship, narrative and language. He states clearly the major goal of S. By analyzing the deeper mythical and semantic structures of narrative (language) it wants to explain *How* and *Why* biblical texts have certain effects and also, to an extent, what the text means. These areas are beyond the conscious intentionality of the original author. Keegan indicates that careful readers of a text will come to the meaning, and experience the effects of the text, but the structuralist shows *How* and *Why* the text operates as it does and thus highlights the meaning.

Three chapters are given to RRC, the clearest example of narrative criticism. It is illustrated in an analysis of the Reader of Matthew's Gospel. Keegan obviously values this approach and has described it clearly. The focal point is the text itself and the activity of the *Reader* "who reduces the virtuality of the text to actuality." The *Text* which has potential meaning becomes a reality when the artistic pole (Text as created by the Author) is actualized by the aesthetic pole (the creative activity of the *Reader*). Because of the creative role of the Reader, RRC insists on the variety of ways in which the potentialities of a Text can be actualized. (Keegan speaks of the indeterminacy of the Reader.) Actually, as we shall see, a reader is predetermined by the world of his pre-understanding and also by the constraints of the Text.

Narrative Criticism is the concrete application of RRC to the Bible. The Text (Narrative Sign) is made up of the *signifier* (narrative) and the *signified* (content which involves the Reader's activity). A Text originates with a *real Reader* (RR) who belongs to the real world. Other authors rightly

distinguish between Narrative Criticism and Reader Response Criticism. As an example we could mention the fine book by Mark Allen Powell *What is Narrative Criticism?* (VJTR 56[1992] p. 375).

However, the Text is a distinct world in which we have: the *implied Author* (IA), namely a literary identity found in the text and distinguished from the real Author; the *implied Reader* (IR), namely the reader implied by this text which presupposes a certain type of reader, with certain attitudes, dispositions, abilities and functions so that the text comes to life; the *Narrator*, the creation of the implied Author (the narrator of John's Gospel knows everything while Mark's narrator is quite limited); the *Narratee*, namely the person in the text to whom the narrator tells the story; and the *Narrative World*, a world of the story distinct from the real world because it is only a limited slice of life with many gaps which the IR must fill, made up of pieces which he or she must piece together. The IA forces the IR by a battery of literary techniques to give life to the Text and also imposes on the IR specific roles, attitudes and a value system.

According to the RRC to identify the IA and IR, the Narrative, namely the text as such, with the RA and RR and RW (Read World) is to commit the referential fallacy. (This is similar to identifying the concept of an object with the real object or story, characters, emotions . . . of a film with the real world.)

The strength of this approach is the constant attention given to the Text in its uniqueness and the fact that it makes us look at the Text from the perspective of the Implied Reader. To the extent that the Real Reader enters into the role of the IR he shall be transformed by the Narrative Text.

Keegan does not indicate sufficiently the role played by some aspects of the HCM, the procedure needed to recognize the IA, Narrator, and the physiognomy of the IR, nor the relationship of the Text World to the Real World in the case of the Gospels which are not fiction. He applies Narrative Criticism to Matthew's Gospel, paying attention to the type of IR demanded by this Gospel (cf. below the review of Edwards' book).

RRC is a valuable approach because it concentrates on the demands and expectations of the IA and Narrator with regard to the IR and on what the IR has to do to bring the texts into being. Therefore the method opens up new dimensions of the texts and helps to bridge the gap between the RA, the Text and the RR. The Word comes alive in the life of the reader with a transformative power.

Keegan does not critique the RRC nor its application to the Gospels and specifically to Mt. On Mt he uses information provided by the HCM, presumes that the reader of Mt knows Mk, and does not indicate how subjectivity is monitored. Why is ch. 13 central to Mt? What are the reasons to link the women of the Genealogy to the Canaanite Woman? How is he sure the IR is supposed to link "left their father" and "your Father" of chs. 5 and 7?

Relating RRC to HCM and using them together as complementary, allowing each to contribute its specific value to the complex task of interpretation, would have enhanced this study. The book concludes with a description of CC (mainly the work of Sanders and Childs, cf. *VJTR* 51 [1987] 92-93) and a reflection in the final chapter on how the new methodologies, especially RRC and CC, throw light on the place of the Bible in the Church today and the nature of inspiration. There is a very handy glossary of technical terms.

We described RRC in detail as there are quite a number of commentaries being written using this method today. We shall include two here. The first, by R.A. Edwards, is an example of RRC applied to Matthew.<sup>4</sup> Fortress Press has published companion volumes for each Gospel. I found Keegan's chapter on Mt more insightful and more clearly illustrative of this hermeneutic approach than this book.

Without using technical language Edwards analyses the Gospel (a story of Jesus) from the point of view of a reader who begins at 1:1 and just follows the story. Edwards shows how the narrator in a cumulative way leads the reader (IR) through the Gospel. He puts all the pieces together concentrating on the effects to be produced on the reader and *by the reader*. He indicates how the Narrator establishes his own reliability, the reliability of his narrative and of the central person, Jesus. The World of the Text and not the Real World is his interest and the special feature of his narrative.

In my opinion the approach is a mixture of a kind of composition criticism and a literary analysis of the skills used in telling a story. The difference from more usual approaches is that the analysis remains strictly within the world of the text without relating the text to Matthew and his community and his age nor to the Real Reader and his life. This book helps us to appreciate the Gospel as an example of narrative literature but not directly as the Word of God.

The other RRC commentary which we include here is Heil's study of Romans.<sup>5</sup> The specific nature of this short commentary is described in the sub-title "Reader-Response." Heil describes his goal in these terms: the book "seeks to articulate how the text of Romans as a literary, rhetorical communication 'works' upon, what persuasive effects it is intended to have upon, its implied reader" (p.1). This method of interpretation isolates the text from the author and the reader, who are called implied author and reader, since Paul and the Roman community are considered only in so far as they can be discovered from the world of the text. Therefore great attention is paid to the rhetorical techniques used, the literary and emotive way

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4. *Matthew's Story of Jesus*. By Richard A. EDWARDS, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1985, Pp. 95.N.p. ISBN 0-8006-1619-7.

5. *Paul's Letter to the Romans. A Reader-Response Commentary*. By John Paul HEIL. Mahwah/New York, Paulist Press, 1987. Pp. xii-195. \$ 9.95. ISBN 0-8091-1896-5.

argumentation and ideas are developed and presented, and the evocative character and potential of the writing. Heil does not comment in the usual exegetical way using elements of the HCM, studying words, interacting with other scholars, discussing exegetical possibilities, textual problems, background questions...

Probably the word "commentary" ought not to be used without the descriptive "Reader-Response." The study is somewhat like a paraphrase or an exposition in which the reader is guided through the argumentation by means of an attentive care given to rhetorical techniques, rhetorical goals and the evocative and emotive purposefulness of Paul. The study is very clearly set out with plenty of headings. Sketches of themes, diagrams of the basic literary structure, summaries, introductions and major summaries at the end of major sections add to the value of the book. It is very easy to read and follow.

The reader is forced to pay attention to the text itself and be familiar with it. Some major terms are explained in an exegetical way. In the brief introduction the apocalyptic-eschatological framework of Paul's thought is described, the reader is introduced to Paul as the epistolary author and to the Roman Christians as the epistolary audience, and major aspects of the literary rhetorical character of the letter are described. The outline of the letter is similar to the normal outlines. The well selected bibliography has some gaps — Byrne's study of Romans, Sander's book on the Law, Fitzmyer's Pauline Theology, ... need to be added.

The major theme and purpose in Heil's mind is *Hope* so that he calls it *The Letter of Hope*. The verses which play a predominant role in indicating Paul's purpose are 1:11-12 (referred to sixteen times). The book achieves its purpose very well. Readers would find this approach educative and be led to apply the method fruitfully to other Pauline letters. This commentary must be supplemented by exegetical commentaries. The "implied reader" knew the situation in Rome, belonged to that culture, was caught up in the life of that community and so had a power to grasp and follow Paul all of which the reader of the commentary does not have and for which he needs help beyond the guidance given by the reader-response method. However, the method does definitely help the student to listen to the letter within the world of the implied author-reader even if the hermeneutical and exegetical tasks remain unattended to. Various methodologies complement each other. If I was teaching Romans I would be pleased to have this book in the library and recommend it to the students as basic reading.

We return to books of an introductory nature about methods of interpretation. The description of the various interpretative methods brings us face to face with two questions: Why is there such a variety and even divisive diversity in the interpretation of Scripture? How do we bridge the gap between the scriptural text as God's Word written centuries ago and the Christian in our world so that the Word be a living Word?

Ferguson addresses himself to these issues.<sup>6</sup> Though he describes aspects of methods of practical interpretation, the strength and utility of his book lie in his reflections on the issues involved in the complex task of interpretation. In one specific section, and throughout the book, he analyses and emphasizes the place of pre-understanding (presuppositions/prejudices...) and its positive and negative function in the process of interpretation. He describes the types of pre-understanding (informational, attitudinal, ideological and methodical) and its functions (comprehensive - limited, rational - irrational, conscious - unconscious...) and underlines the place of faith. He also analyses the different critical assumptions among Christians which affect interpretation, assumptions about the nature of the Bible (unity, diversity, style, character) and concepts related to the Bible (revelation, inspiration, inerrancy, Word of God, Tradition...).

As important as his emphasis on pre-understanding is the chapter devoted to such crucial issues as Bible-Faith, History-Revelation. Here the reader is asked to grapple with the problem of God's self-revelation in history, the meaning of history, faith and historicity and the resurrection as historical.

The final chapters are a historical survey and evaluation of representative interpreters within Christian history: Origen (non-historical), Luther (naive historicity — exclusion of tradition), Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, Bultmann, Ebling, Fuchs, Barth, Ott, Pannenberg, Moltmann, Liberation, Process and Culture theologians and Ricoeur. In his appraisal Ferguson pays attention to pre-understanding and the respect for the historical character of biblical revelation, the role of faith and the respect due to the text. All these writers struggle to make the Word alive for their contemporaries.

Another very valuable section in the study deals with the practical and actual place of the Bible in theology, worship, catechesis, pastoral care and formation. The theoretical and practical guidelines especially for the role of the Bible in theology (pp. 108-115), Christian nurture (pp.126-28) and the general principles of interpretation (pp. 100-102) will be very useful to students of theology and pastors. I would have added a section on the prophetic nature of the Word.

This book is theoretical, open and sound, practical, clear and quite a deep study. Although the description of the methods is brief and needs to be supplemented, the comprehensive survey of the issues involved in the task of interpretation and the ordered, wise and informative treatment of them makes the book very useful for students and others interested in the crucial and demanding task of making the Word a living Word for today and who have not read very much on this topic.

Few Catholic exegetes have shown as much concern in their articles and books as Raymond Brown that Catholics grasp and appreciate the

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6. *Biblical Hermeneutics. An Introduction.* By Duncan S. FERGUSON, Atlanta, John Knox Press, 1986. Pp. vi-220. N.p. ISBN 0-8042-0050-5.



fruitfulness of modern biblical studies for an intelligent and deep Christian life. He is aware of the damage done to the faith life of Christians by both ultra-conservative groups and publications in the USA (in India *The Laity* group's journal would belong here) and the liberal Catholic groups and writings. A major concern of his has been an exact and disciplined exegesis, and to describe and trace the trajectory of the diversity of Christianity found in the NT, in the post-biblical age and also in the ongoing life of the churches today. His work has also been marked by a commitment to ecumenism. Like others, he has been brought into disrepute both by the attacks on his critical exegetical methodology and work by ultra conservatives and by the misuse of his work and conclusions by 'liberals'.

Because critical exegesis is important and fruitful for the Christian in today's world, Brown has on various occasions defended the HCM and his own work. In personal and cooperative ventures he has demonstrated the value and necessity of a critical study of the Word. Among his many publications we mention the following: *Priest and Bishop*, *The Virgin Conception and Bodily Resurrection of Jesus*, *The Birth of the Messiah*, *Biblical Reflections on the Crises Facing the Church*, and the ecumenical works, *Peter in the New Testament*, and *Mary in the New Testament*. Like an earlier work, *The Critical Meaning of the Bible* (1981), his recent book deals with the question of scientific biblical exegesis.<sup>7</sup> He clearly describes and ably justifies the particular, limited and yet necessary place of HCM in Roman Catholicism, describing his own theological position as centrist. He defends the method against the revisionist — both fundamentalist tendencies and those who oppose this method since it questions their hermeneutical purpose and interests (i.e., a text has life of its own; and the Bible used to justify a cause in a proof text approach). A crucial question for many is the role and value of critical exegesis in relation to the development of doctrine. How is doctrine related to Scripture? Brown presents clearly and distinctly the presuppositions of the discussions (infallibility, value of doctrines, language used in definitions...) and illustrates his understanding by example of doctrines for which there is (a) "abundant but incipient basis in Scripture" (Trinity, baptism, eucharist); (b) "slender basis in Scripture" (virginal conception, bodily Resurrection of Jesus, Papacy); (c) "virtual silence" (Assumption, Immaculate Conception); and finally "partial silence" (institution of sacraments by Christ). In each case Brown shows what is its status (infallible, defined, ordinary teaching of the magisterium...) and how the bridge is built between the Scriptural evidence and the doctrine. He insists on the importance of critically understanding the development of doctrine. In the following chapters he deals with conservative misunderstandings (McHugh and especially Laurentin on the Infancy Narratives) and liberal misunderstanding (Sheehan's liberal consensus). To illustrate the value of critical exegesis for

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7. *Biblical Exegesis and Church Doctrine*, Raymond E. BROWN, New York/Mahwah, Paulist Press, 1985. Pp. 171. \$ 5.95. ISBN 0-8091-2750-4.

Christian life and belief today he gives examples of its contributions. He studies Mary and Marian doctrine (a repetition, really), the Holy Spirit (not such a good example), the Local Church (rich and insightful) and in Acts the doctrinal priorities of the early Church (useful). Two notes have been appended, one on the Shroud of Turin (dated now) and a critique of Laurentin's exegesis of the Infancy Narratives.

Educated Catholics, Bishops and Priests would profit greatly from a careful reading of this book in which Brown uses and summarises many of his earlier writings. The problems Brown faces are present within the Catholic community in India where we have also liberals, conservatives and centrists. Often those at the centre are confused with the liberal or the "left" when they actually serve the Word and the community faith. The book is a vigorous defence of critical exegesis.

Since we published a long article on "Hermeneutics and the Bible in Liberation Theology" (VJTR 56[1992]385-402) we need not comment in detail on a collection of articles edited by N.K. Gottwald.<sup>8</sup> Many of the essays approach the text from what could be described as a reader-centred approach or in-front-of-the-text approach. The concerns of the readers enable them to find meaning in texts which have often been overlooked or forgotten. The reader gives life to the text. The predominant thrust of the collection is to survey, explain and illustrate how social sciences especially sociology are pertinent to the interpretative task. A sociological study of the texts enables readers to understand the production of the texts themselves, their content, aspects of the history of Israel, prophecy, Jesus' ministry, the early Church and also gives new dimensions to the hermeneutical process.

A number of essays are written from the feminist perspective (Bird, Meyers, Schottroff and Schussler-Fiorenza). The greatest emphasis is given to sociological studies (Malina, Scroggs, Gottwald [*Tribes of Israel*], Theissen, Gager, Smith...). Some essays are explicitly related to class concerns (Rostagno, Fussell, Mesters, Hardegree and Siebert). The book deserves constant use because of the perspectives which are emphasized, though the fruits of some studies are open to question no less than the questions posed by some authors about more traditional methods. The Asian and African dimensions of political and social hermeneutics are missing.

The final book in this section is the most comprehensive survey of major interpretative trends covering the whole continuum of methods. It is an anthology edited by McKim of twenty-one previously published (at times revised) articles covering most dimensions of hermeneutics today.<sup>9</sup> The editor has gathered the material under five headings.

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8. *The Bible and Liberation. Political and Social Hermeneutics*. Edited by Norman K. GOTTWALD, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1984 (1983). Pp. xii-542. \$ 18.95. ISBN 0-88344-044-x.

9. *A Guide to Contemporary Hermeneutics. Major Trends in Biblical Interpretation*. Edited by Donald K. McKIM. Grand Rapids, Wm.B. Eerdmans, 1986. Pp. xx-385. N.p. ISBN 0-8028-0094-7.

The first section is *Biblical Avenues* which includes a rapid and concise survey of recent OT and NT hermeneutics and statements on evangelical hermeneutics as well as essays on interpretative procedures like typology, *sensus plenior*, precritical hermeneutics and the new hermeneutic of Fuchs, Gadamer, Ricoeur and Ebeling (by Thiselton). The overriding concern throughout is how to move from "there" (the author, text and original audience) to "here", the modern Christian community. In these essays we become aware of the profound effects the social sciences, linguistics, modern philosophies and the concrete context of modern life including injustice and oppression have on interpretative theories and practice. The authors show an adequate respect for the horizon of the text and of modern communities, and establish a dialogue between these horizons aiming at their genuine fusion through a dialogical process of interpretation. The hermeneutical suspicion (namely, of biases within the very texts themselves because they are human productions) has a major role to play and many voice their dissatisfaction with the HCM though normally they accept its limited role. Others, however, are suspicious of many aspects of modern approaches and look back to the old models and theories since the community has been served and enriched by the Bible prior to all modern (19th-20th centuries) critical study.

In the second section, *Theological Attitudes*, two essays consider the influence of these attitudes on interpretation. Because the Bible is the Word of God, should normal basic rules of interpretation be employed? Kaiser strongly defends the absolute need of using the basic laws of interpretation inbuilt into all human communication. He distinguishes clearly and emphatically between *meaning* (what the author wants to communicate) and *significance* (the meaning for the reader today), insisting on the validity of the first step, namely the search for the author/text meaning. In a second essay Thiselton takes up the objections to hermeneutics on the basis of the Bible being the Word of God. Are not the Holy Spirit's action, faith, the power of the Word, or the timeless truths contained in the Word, adequate in themselves for a faithful understanding? Though these approaches draw our attention to valid points, yet they ultimately deny the distinctive human role of the author and reader. If we accept and underline the human contribution we have to face the problem of pre-understanding (common understanding/common ground/lived experience) as a necessary aspect in the process of interpretation. Pre-understanding is needed to "unlock and disclose" meaning. However it is to a very large extent formed by influences from outside the Bible (often inimical to it?), such as some contemporary philosophies and praxis, the socio-economic, political ideologies of the reader . . . . Therefore, the text must be allowed and made to question, influence, expand or change the interpreter's pre-understanding. There is a hermeneutical spiral at work in good interpretation. Probably "spiral" is a more apt term than "circle."

Three essays are gathered under the rubric *Current Assessments*. Froehlich, surveying the area, makes two significant points. Attention needs to be paid to the *scholarly interpreters* themselves who are a comparatively new

phenomena. They have a double (conflicting?) loyalty, to the ethos, pressures and demands of professional scholarship and to their Church community. Froehlich describes the hermeneutics of Stuhlmacher, who is responsible for an ecumenical commentary series in German. Stuhlmacher critiques the HCM and insists on the need of the interpreter to be committed to hear the Word as a member of the Christian community and to incorporate into all interpretation the understanding of the Word throughout its history in the life of the Christian community over the centuries. Froehlich seeks ways of reconciling the loyalties of scholar and believer and producing richer ecumenical hermeneutics.

In a more philosophical contribution on the nature, scope and functions of Hermeneutics, Gillespie reminds us of the need to clarify the meaning of the terms often used and to see how various authors have understood them. He clarifies the meaning of the interrelated terms *Interpretation*, *Meaning*, *Language* and *Understanding* in the context of hermeneutics. The following are valuable aspects of his study: the distinction made now by many authors between *sense* (author's meaning) and *significance* (meaning for us) and *reference* (that about which the author writes? — text meaning); in his discussion of language, the treatment of semantic field, diachronic and synchronic linguistics, the influential and conventional nature of language, the debate about the sign or image character of language, the relationship between language and reality. He also discusses the interrelated interpretative approaches which concentrate more or less exclusively (a) *on the text*: something said or written — to rationalize ("the *in* the text approach"); (b) *on the writer/speaker*: someone who writes or says something — to subjectivize ("the meaning *behind* the text in-personal-experience approach") and (c) *on the reference* ("*sache*"): what is said or written about something — reality manifests itself ("the *in front* of the text approach"). Related to the above approaches are the ways "understanding" is used. Understanding is either to enter into the world of the author, or dialogically to allow a fusion of the worlds of author-text-reference with the world of the interpreter. This leads again to the place of pre-understanding. Gillespie critiques the great writers on hermeneutics up to Ricoeur. One of his final paragraphs is worth quoting: "By analogy, the relationship of understanding to meaning is like that of a harbour buoy to its anchor. Textual meaning is the anchor which tethers the buoy of understanding to the sense, the reference, and the significance intended by the author. The chain that connects them is the interpretation process. At the level of comprehending the *sense* of the text the chain holds firm. At the level of appropriating the reference it begins to move with the currents introduced by the interpreter's pre-understanding of the subject matter. And at the level of applying the significance of the text it floats with the changing conditions of the seas of history. Yet even here it does not run free. For the significance of the text is still anchored to the author's intention and moves only within the range permitted by appropriate historical analogies" (p.218). This is a fine summary and explains the type of autonomy we can posit for the text in the

process of appropriating the reference of the text. The essay also explains the ways various authors search for those features in human life and communication which are needed for the interpretation of recent or ancient writings.

The final essay in this section, "Mind Reader and Maestro: Models for Understanding Biblical Interpreters," could be reflected upon fruitfully by the guild of scholarly interpreters. The author offers two major paradigms of the *self-understanding of the interpreter* related to his attitude to the text and to the way he sees his relationship to "the Church's nurture and preservation of its self-identity." He names the paradigms the historical and the linguistic. In the first the interpreter is either a historian or can be described as a *Mind Reader* intent on discovering the intention of the author for his original audience. He critiques this model both from the angle of "author" and the complexity of mind reading. In the other paradigm the text has its own autonomy. Briefly describing the classical structuralist approach, the author's major contribution is to suggest roles for the interpreter to ensure the effectiveness of the text within the life of the believing community. He argues that "*the fundamental form of the Christian interpretation of Scripture is the life, activity and organization of the Christian community*" (p. 228). Text, community and interpretation are interrelated. He suggests models for the interpreter's role. The interpreter's self-understanding is characterized by his basic concern for nurture. Accepting the role and need of the HCM he sees the interpreter successively as a conductor of an orchestra, a player-coach, a deliberator in a process of political involvement and finally as a story teller. In each case the different roles respond to different aspects of the biblical text and its purposes. All texts have itineraries as they come alive within the history of the believing community which itself is the locus for discerning the appropriateness, truth and validity of the interpretation. The authority of the Bible as Scripture is commensurate with its effectiveness in the life of the community.

In the final section of this very valuable book the editor has gathered essays which describe the *Contemporary Approaches* to interpretation. He has selected essays on the Theological (Barth), Literary (use of modern theories of literature), Structural, Contextual (Hermeneutic Circle), Anthropological ("Supracultural Meanings via Cultural Forms" by C.H. Kraft), Liberational (Hermeneutic of Suspicion and Praxis) and finally Feminist (Sexist Nature of Scripture and Emancipatory Praxis). We shall not comment on these approaches. The anthropological model is dialogical, pays special attention to the interpreter and receptor and to the context but respects the unique role of the Bible itself.

This would be the book to which I would expose advanced students and any adult reader who is fascinated by the major challenge to make the Word of God alive for us today. The whole interpretative process and task is a fine interplay and balance of a number of complex factors which go beyond ordinary hermeneutics and yet must be true to all the rules of

human communication and interpretation because when God speaks he speaks in human words through human persons. At various moments interpreters will emphasize one aspect more than another. Damage is only done when one aspect or step in the process is given a disproportionate importance and other aspects are omitted or denied any significant role. The three great factors are the text (author, text, reference), the interpreter, and the context today. The aim is that the Word of God be a living Word today, the two-edged sword in human life. To bridge the gap between the Word of God in the Bible and today's believing community and make this word alive is the challenge. All hermeneutic theories are at the service of this final goal.

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Related to the question of interpretation is the problem of defining the nature of and basis for *the authority of the Bible*. As Christians became more conscious of the complex process through which the Bible originated within the believing Jewish and Christian communities and the historical process of canonization, they were more aware that current explanations of inspiration and of the authority of the Bible were inadequate. The ecumenical movement has also forced Christian denominations to clarify the basis for biblical authority and related issues so that the common and authoritative Word be a living and normative Word today.

Robert Gnuse has surveyed and categorized the different approaches to the question of the authority of the Bible for students.<sup>10</sup> The primary aim of the book is to investigate, evaluate and organize for students the various types of answers given to the question: Why is the Bible authoritative?

He categorizes the models used by biblical writers and theologians, somewhat arbitrarily as he admits, under the following headings: Inspiration (with four sub-headings: Strict Verbal, Limited Verbal, Non-textual and Social); Salvation History (with three sub-headings: Salvific Events as Authoritative, Interpretation of Events as Authoritative and History as Revelation); Existentialism (with three sub-headings: Classic, Symbolic, Common); Christocentric Models (with two sub-headings: Christ as Norm, and Canon within a Canon); Models of Limitation (with two sub-headings: Open Canon and Limited Authority).

As inspiration has been the common Christian term for the authority of the Bible he discusses the various models which have been proposed. While strict verbal inspiration affirms the inerrancy and infallibility of the Bible, limited verbal inspiration seeks to reconcile and respect both divine and human activity, the particular type of truth to be found in the Bible and the purpose itself of the Bible. Moving away from the inspiration of the text

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10. *The Authority of the Bible. Theories of Inspiration, Revelation and the Canon of Scripture*. By Robert GNUSE. New York/Mahwah, Paulist Press, 1985. Pp. 153. \$ 6.95. ISBN 0-8091-2692-3.

we have the theories according to which ideas of individuals are inspired, a non-textual inspiration. The progress in biblical study has demanded that the role of the communities of faith in the formation of the Bible and the Canon be included in the study of inspiration. This has led to the proposals of social inspiration. Each approach is critiqued by the author. In retrospect he concludes that inspiration, authority-normativeness (inerrancy is excluded as a false category) and canonicity are distinct though related realities and the locus of authority needs to be sought elsewhere. This is questionable if it means the exclusion of inspiration and canonicity.

In the next sets of theories for authority we move away from the text of the Bible or one of its primary qualities to a description of the ways theologians have used the Bible to give authority to their theologies and so indirectly to affirm the basis for its authority. The Bible would be authoritative because it brings to us the actual salvific events (e.g., Exodus, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ) or, according to others, the interpretation of these events. A further step is to affirm that all history is revelation; then the biblical text itself is really excluded as the centre of authority.

Turning from this action of God in history or its interpretation, the authority of the Word is derived from and based upon its effectiveness in evoking here and now a salvific faith-response to the God who discloses himself or in transforming the lives of those who listen to it. Gnuse includes here the theories which stress the diverse literary characteristics of the Bible and incorporate the precise mode of divine self-communication into their understanding of its nature and the way it is actually effective. Many authors made Christ himself the locus of the authority of the Bible. They refer to the Christ event, the person and teaching of the Jesus of history or Christ as the living Lord of the Church. The OT is then authoritative in a typological way. The danger in such an approach is that sooner or later a "canon within the canon" (Jesus' love command, Jesus' values, the Kingdom of God, option for the poor, social liberation, justification...) becomes the source of authority and the whole of Scripture is no longer authoritative.

Others limit the authority of the Bible either by positing an open canon and so allowing non-canonical writings to enjoy more or less equal authority, or by positing an authority independent of Scripture (tradition-magisterium wrongly understood, spiritual experience, absolute truths...).

Finally, Gnuse outlines how the consciousness of biblical authority emerged. This helps the reader to evaluate some of the theories of inspiration and the normative character of the Bible. His final chapter on the ecumenical discussion, namely Scripture and Tradition, leads to our next book. Gnuse's book is a good text book, informative and evaluative, yet the readers are left to formulate their own understanding of inspiration and the basis of authority. Any valid theory will attempt to combine internal characteristics with external factors, an interplay of the subjective and objective, the divine action and human collaboration and the role of the believing

community and the Spirit.

We include in this review a series of important documents produced by commissions of the WCC on authority and the interpretation of the Bible.<sup>11</sup> There are five reports which respond to various needs and issues. We shall make comments on each document.

After a fine Introduction in which we journey through the whole area, the first document is entitled: "Guiding Principles for the Interpretation of the Bible" (Ecumenical Study Conference 1949). It briefly outlines specific principles about the use of the Bible in reference to socio-political issues of the day.

The second document takes up a major area: "Scripture, Tradition and Traditions" (Faith and Order Conference Montreal 1963). Defining the various meanings of tradition, the document describes the Tradition which is prior to all traditions and more extensive/basic than Scripture itself as "God's revelation and self-giving in Christ, present in the life of the Church" (p.21). To it are related both Scripture and all traditions, namely, the most diverse expressions of Christian life in history and also the confessional traditions and their expressions in cultural traditions. This is an admirable attempt to find a criterion to evaluate all other traditions and to move away from the *sola scriptura* or *magisterium* or varieties of subjective criteria.

The following document takes up the question of how do we bridge the gulf between Tradition-Scripture and our lives today: "The Significance of the Hermeneutical Problem for the Ecumenical Movement" (Faith and Order Commission, Bristol 1967). As the Bible is accepted as the fundamental source of Christian life, its interpretation is basic to all the work of the WCC; yet we must reckon with a great diversity of attitudes to the Bible and its interpretation. This document reflects sound principles of hermeneutics. Acknowledging the place of the HCM because of the historical nature of the Bible, the document affirms the unity and diversity of Scripture as constitutive of its nature. It affirms many good aspects of valid interpretation — levels of meaning in texts (redaction), respect for imagery and symbolism, the relationship of the part to the whole, the value of secular sciences and philosophies and the positive role of pre-understanding. One major point emphasized is that the questions asked of the text today open up new awareness of the biblical message and aspects neglected, forgotten, undervalued . . . . The document is aware that good interpretation questions and modifies confessional stances and differences.

In the next document we enter again the major area of Gruse's study: "The Authority of the Bible" (Faith and Order Commission, Louvain 1971). This is a rich document which faces the basic problem of biblical authority

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11. *The Bible, Its Authority and Interpretation in the Ecumenical Movement*. Edited by Ellen FLESSEMAN-VAN LEER (Faith and Order Paper No 99). Geneva, World Council of Churches, 1983. Pp. ix-79. N.p. ISBN 2-8254-09643-0.



in and between the churches. Confessional differences on this subject, the place of the HCM, the variety of hermeneutical approaches, the importance of the questions asked of the Bible rising from contemporary experience, the importance of relational centres in interpretation, the interrelationship between event and its interpretation, are all discussed. This document seeks to define the source of biblical authority. Is it external or internal to the Bible, or both? What is the role of the Spirit and the believing community? How do interpretative perspectives affect the question? How is authority related to revelation? To determine the basis of authority is important in the search for and the understanding of the unity of Christians and the effective witness of the churches (WCC) and for their responses to the challenges, needs, questions and life in our age.

The final document addresses itself to a neglected and debatable area: "The Significance of the Old Testament in its Relations to the New" (Faith and Order Standing Committee, Bangalore 1978). This report is highly significant. The reason for the study was the diversity of attitudes to OT and its varied use (or lack of use) in the churches. The other four documents themselves are witness to the practical neglect of the OT as little explicit mention is made in them.

With perhaps the exception of Liberation Theology and the recent Creation Theology, within the Roman Catholic communion at least the OT normally plays a minor role in theology, formation and homiletics-catechesis. The indispensable place of the OT, its re-interpretation, the relationship between the Testaments and the place of the OT in Christian life are described with insight. The relation of the OT to people of other faiths and the Christian believer is tentatively considered. The OT canon, the complexity and types of relationship between the OT and NT within different ecclesial or theological traditions, as well as the large area of common perspectives, are treated. Different attitudes to the theological unity of the Testaments from the perspective of history are outlined. The relationship is described in terms of covenant, hope and wisdom. The specificity of the NT is described (Jesus Christ in his incarnation, suffering and death, his resurrection and the Holy Spirit) and the term "fulfillment," often misrepresented, is carefully defined. Those specific aspects of God's Word likely to be missed by the reader of the NT but highlighted in the OT are listed — the OT is valued for itself though not separated from God's revelation in Jesus Christ. The study concludes with a short description of its ecumenical relevance and recommendations about the Canon, the relevance of the OT in the life of the churches and the study of the OT and people of other faiths.

Each document is placed within the historical setting of its origin and by means of footnotes in the fifth the inter-relationship between the documents, the development of ideas and the variance in positions are indicated. These statements are marked by conciseness, clarity and soundness. They show the ecclesial diversity within a more fundamental Christian unity in attitudes to the Bible. The reader notices that these are commission documents and not the work of one hand.

# Book Reviews

## Mary

**Mary in the Mystery of the Covenant.** By LA POTTERIE, Ignace de, S.J. New York: Alba House, 1991. Pp. xlvii-266. \$ 15.95. ISBN 0-8189-0632-4.

This is a book of biblical Mariology, a painstaking analysis of the main Marian texts. The theological interpretation of the texts searches out beyond their immediate, individual meaning about Jesus' and Mary's persons towards their wider significance in the mystery of the Covenant: "The theme 'Daughter of Zion', feminine figure described in the prophetic literature and the Psalms, is the truly unifying element in all our analyses" (Epilogue, 265). The Covenant perspective, its ecclesial dimension, make the book significant in the present period of decline of Marian theology and devotion.

This decline has been attributed to the Council decision not to present the text on Mary as a separate document but to include it as chapter eight of the Constitution on the Church. This decision was interpreted as a disapproval of the exuberant pre-Vatican theological and devotional literature on Mary. In fact it meant a turn from the often individualistic presentation of Marian theology and devotion to its full Christological and ecclesial significance as it is expressed in the final title of the text: "The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, in the mystery of Christ and of the Church." This decision of the Council has symbolic significance: the re-insertion of Mariology into the lifestream of Christian faith and worship. It has been called by Ratzinger "a spiritual moment of watershed" (xx), which opens access to a new depth in the understanding of Mary. This depth has to be discovered. The present book is meant as a guide in this search, to see "the devotion to and the theology about Mary in

their relationship with the mystery of Christ and the Church" (xxi).

In four (unequal) parts the book presents 1. Mary as "Virgin and Mother," an analysis of the Annunciation texts of Luke and Matthew and of John's prologue; 2. "The Mystery of the Wedding Feast," the analysis of the Cana text; 3. "Mother of the Messianic People of God," Mary under the cross; 4. "Archetype of the Church, Mother and Bride," chapter 12 of the Apocalypse.

The author characterizes the method of modern exegesis as a process "from philology to theology, or, in other words, from letter to spirit" (5). He is conscious that "exegesis does not have as its task the definition of dogmas" but rather "effectively to establish the better foundation of the dogma" (19). In the explanation of the texts the author offers the immense wealth of his many years of teaching in the Biblical Institute, his thorough acquaintance with the patristic interpretations of the texts and modern trends and controversies. In deciding on his own explanations he does not simply follow the prevailing opinion but he may surprise the reader with translations to which he is not used. Most important may be his interpretation of Jn 1:13: the usually accepted reading refers the text to the new life of the believers (plural) who "are born not of blood, neither by the will of the flesh nor by the will of man, but of God." La Potterie insists on the singular and so refers the text to the origin of Jesus born of the Virgin: "He is not born of blood . . . but of God." The author surely does make a substantial contribution to this and other controversies. In his argumentation he proceeds with the factual presentation of vast historical and literary data. At the same time he is guided by strong convictions about

the intentions of the evangelists: e.g., in the question (just mentioned) of whether John 1:13 refers to Jesus' virginal conception he begins with the remark: "From this fundamental vision of St John, concerning the mystery of Christ, i.e., Jesus' life and work totally transparent to the Logos, we can conclude a priori and with certitude that he had to be equally interested in the concrete way in which the Incarnation was accomplished in history" (72).

Every one of the texts treated in the book is controversial in various details; it will hardly be expected that through the present book all these issues will be decided. But every one of these texts also contains a symbolic dimension which often is not sufficiently recognized — this is mostly the case in John's gospel. In all biblical texts Mary is more than an individual person. The "Virgin" of Nazareth and the "woman" of John's Gospel are transparent to the mystery of salvation, fulfilling the role of the "Daughter of Zion" in the Old Testament and anticipating the mystery of the Church of Jesus Christ as its symbol and prototype. Symbols are a language by themselves, different from the language of concepts. They must be understood to some extent, but most of all they must be seen, not only with material eyes but with the eyes of faith. La Potterie's book helps us to see. In some passages and digressions he may go quite far on the line of scientific analysis, but he never loses sight of his basic intention to elucidate the symbolism of the biblical language about Mary, expressed in his title "Mary in the Mystery of the Covenant."

J. NEUNER, S.J.

Mary for all Christians. By John MACQUARRIE. Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans 1991. Pp.xiii-160, \$ 12.95. ISBN 0-8026-0543-4.

Mariology was not a topic of controversy at the beginning of the Reformation. Luther and Calvin took over the bulk of the Catholic teaching about Mary. In the course of the Counter-Reformation, however, Mary became the symbol of the Catholic struggle against Protestantism. Consequently an anti-Marian attitude

developed among many Protestants along with an anti-Catholic animosity. In the last century the conflict intensified with the protest against the definition of the Immaculate Conception and again this century with the declaration of the dogma of the Assumption.

The present book has grown out of the efforts of the "Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary" which comprises Orthodox Catholics, Lutherans, Anglicans, Methodists, etc., along with Roman Catholics. It is the aim of this society to find in Mary an inspiration for unity among Christians rather than for conflict. This is not a book of controversy but an inspiring exposition of the full catholic understanding of Mary. These are chapters of rich and sound theology. It is, according to the title, addressed to all Christians, an exposition of the 'catholic' teaching with sensitivity for the apprehensions of Protestant readers.

The first of the six chapters, "God and the Feminine," places the theme in the context of our society. The author is convinced that the sexual revolution of our days is not merely a social or anthropological problem but has its roots in the divine mystery itself. "The study of the Marian mystery can help Christians to reach a fuller and more balanced understanding of the feminine in their religion" (23). The biblical data are collected in the chapter "Mary in the New Testament." The author's rather negative interpretation of Mark's image of Mary may be questioned.

In the chapter on the "Immaculate Conception" the author seems to come into his own. It is a penetrating presentation of Mary's holiness. The long doctrinal development of this dogma had been burdened with problems about the physiological origin of life. When speaking of Mary's origin "we should understand conception as the absolute origin of the person...; it speaks not about the fusion of cells or anything of the sort but of the mystery of coming into being of the human person" (62). Before the conception in her mother's womb, Mary "was originally conceived and sanctified in the divine purpose" (65). Therefore the "first instant" in the definition of 1854 is not

limited to the biological moment of her physical origin but "reaches back even into the eternity of God" (69).

Also the mystery of Mary's Assumption is seen not as an isolated doctrine but as "an authentic part of that whole fabric that we call the catholic faith" (83-84). It is the mystery of Christian fulfillment which "begins with the dormition of the Blessed Virgin Mary, but is continued throughout the history of the Church and will be completed only when the Church is fully united with the Lord" (95).

With the chapter "Mary Corredemptrix" the author enters the most controversial realm of Mariology, the place of human freedom in God's redemptive plan. The expression seems to contradict the basic Protestant "dogma" of *"sola gratia"*. Macquarrie maintains that this is the case only if *sola gratia* is "interpreted in an extreme form, when this doctrine itself becomes a threat to the genuinely personal and biblical view of the human being as made in the image of God and destined for God, a being still capable of responding to God...and serving God in the building up the creation. This hopeful view of the human race is personified and enshrined in Mary" (112).

In the concluding chapter, "Mary and Modernity," the author faces the bewildering estrangement between the gospel world of faith, hope and love embodied in Mary and modern society with its ethics and values which he sees summed up in the triad of the French revolution, liberty, equality, fraternity. Mary's place in the modern world concretizes the problem of the Christian presence in our society. The author's struggle with the problem is open-ended—it finally remains the readers personal task. The Marian Office used by the Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary is added at the end of the book.

For Protestant readers the book is an invitation to rethink Mary's place in Christian faith and life and to examine prejudices which block the access to Mary. For Catholics it contains valuable perspectives and helps to outgrow fossil-

ized formulae which at times obscure Mary's unique mystery.

J. NEUNER, S.J.

## Feminism

*God is More Loving than a Mother.* By A. Kulandamsamy JULIAN. Madras: CLS, 1991. Pp. xiv-101. Rs 20.

The author has done a comparative study on the Motherly Love of God in Deutero-Isaiah and in Tiruvacagam. His is a systematic and scholarly work which brings out beautifully in its apt title God is more loving than a Mother, the content of the book and the basic truth of Christianity and Hinduism as well. The book is part of a thesis defended at the Gregorian University. The bibliography and table of contents of the original thesis are included.

Tiruvacagam, the mystic poems of Manikkavacakar, belongs to the Tamil Saivite tradition. A.K. Julian has done a re-reading of Deutero-Isaiah in this cultural context, showing its richness and the similarities and dissimilarities with Tiruvacagam. The research done in the Indian context of 'religious plurality' shows how we can discover the deep mystical aspects of Saiva Hinduism and sincerely draw much from them. The author is, besides, a competent biblical scholar.

This book is an asset to the contemporary Indian concerns of inculturation and dialogue. These are presented in a concrete topic and a specific culture. Any reader will find it easy to grasp the book thanks to its simplicity of language and clarity of thought. Clear explanations of difficult words and directions to pronounce Tamil words are also given. The book is a clear indication that a country like India is a fertile land for a new hermeneutic and for a theology of religions.

Sr. AUGUSTA, SD

*Through Her Eyes. Women's Theology in Latin America.* Edited by Elsa TAMEZ. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1989. Pp. vii-168. \$ 11.95 (pbk.). ISBN 0-88344-373-2.

This powerful book is the collection

of twenty-eight women theologians' reflections. They met in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Oct. 30-Nov. 3, 1985. They were from different churches, and from nine countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. There is a diversity of opinions, nuances, experiences and impressions found in the book.

About 50% of population of Latin America and for that matter of the whole globe are women; but women are condemned to live in a world of male domination and female discrimination. Even in the embryonic stage the female is condemned, annihilated or just tolerated. Anna Maria Bidegain narrates that women were captives and slaves in number of ways in Latin American history. Woman was used for slave labour, she was the master's sex-tool, she was the mother who reproduced a labour force for the hardest kind of works. A male dominated ideology supported by historico-social subjugation kept or left women on a pedestal of religion and family. "Here she was everything"! However she had no role in political and professional life. Teresa Cavalcanti says: "God is someone who helps us believe we are valuable and who helps us fight for what we need. Freedom is not our goal; any one who takes up the struggle is already free" (p.138). Elsa Tamez says that women need a militant theology. There should be a theological and ideological approach. Women are created in God's image.

It is emphasized in the book that women have to make new interpretations of the Bible. Maria Clara Bingemer gives a lengthy re-reading of the Trinity. She culls out feminine traits in the Father: merciful and benevolent; in the Son, the manifestation of a tender, warm, and affectionate personality; in the Spirit, a soothing and gentle breeze. All these are feminine traits. An entire chapter is devoted to Christology. Jesus stands for women. Similarly the chapter on the prophetic role of women in the Bible is well developed. Mary's song — the Magnificat — has a powerful tone.

From this book we grow in the

awareness that in Latin America's evangelization and liberative struggles women have had and have a great and pioneering role. Women's worth, equality and dignity are like the lost drachma to be discovered and celebrated in theological circles with great joy.

This forceful volume is a stimulant for a relevant theology of women. It leaves the sympathetic reader on a springboard for further reflection and action. The whole approach is positive and full of vision.

P.A. JOSEPH, OFM Cap.

## India

**Weakness of Power and Power of Weakness.** Seeking Clarity, Credibility and Solidarity. By Somen DAS. Delhi: ISPCK, 1990. Pp. 82. Rs. 15.

The seventh ordinary meeting of the Synod of the Church of North India on "The Church's Priorities for the Last Decade of the 20th Century" was convened between the 3rd and 10th October 1989. Dr Somen Das was invited to lead the worship and do the Bible studies in the daily sessions. A booklet which he prepared for this purpose has been revised and expanded for publication.

This book contains six small chapters written with a biblical theological perspective. Focussing on different themes, each chapter has three selected readings from the Old Testament, the Apostolic Tradition and the Gospel. The author emphasizes the Church's priority and commitment to the poor and the oppressed, giving concrete examples from the above three sources.

In the first two chapters, he attempts to articulate the theme of charity in terms of worship and education. Worship should evoke a divine sense of love and justice leading us to engage in liberative action in an unjust society. In this sense, he says, "worship and work must be one." To understand this truth we need to develop knowledge — and theological education in particular. Such an education helps us to have an understanding which ultimately shows the way to dis-

commitment and liberation.

The 3rd and 4th chapters analyse the Church's credibility in terms of her understanding and use of power. Das has taken Max Weber's *Gemeinschaft* (human community in formation) as his base to question the nature and function of the community which wants to form the Church of God. According to him, the fundamental problem in the Church is to develop a life of communion among the members, a team spirit for the common welfare. He insists on the collegial hierarchy in the Church.

The world's scientific and intellectual power is not able to overcome the poverty and injustice in the majority of the masses. Das calls this the weakness of power. By contrast, the powerless poor and oppressed develop strength and courage to fight against injustices and for their own liberation and empowerment.

In the last two chapters Das discusses the need an authentic solidarity of the Church with the oppressed masses who are deliberately denied justice. He gives a new perspective on the concept of righteousness. It means sharing, caring and fellowship. He feels that the Church is called from *diakonia* (service) to *dikaio-syne* (justice).

Jesus searched for God's will through struggle, suffering, sacrifice and even the death on the cross. Discerning the will of God is our mission and leads us to commit ourselves fully to the liberation of the oppressed. For effective action, we need to have a deeper understanding of socio-political, economic and cultural perceptions and a systematic analysis of society today.

In the appendix, six "orders of worship" on the same six themes are given. These prayers could be used in any meeting of priests, religious or bishops.

The power structure of the Church today and its consequences on the powerless are very well analysed. At the end of each chapter, Das raises relevant questions, challenging the commitment and the attitudes of clergy, especially the hierarchical Church of North India. This book provides a fundamental understanding

of, guidelines for and approaches to effective liberative action. It also gives a biblical base for the spirituality of social activists and others who are committed to empower the poor.

A more elaborate study of each topic would have helped to understand more deeply the issues which challenge the Church and the attitudes of the Church authorities towards these issues.

L. JEBAMALAI RAJA, S.J.

*Some Reflections on the Theme of Continuity and Change in Indian Culture.* By Neville JAYAWEERA, Delhi: ISPCK, 1990. Pp. 72. Rs 25.

Jayaweera presents an amazing amount of information and reflection on several aspects of Indian thought. He has developed his ideas systematically and put into simple language what one would find difficult to express. His presentation is succinct and precise. A lay person in philosophy would find it quite easy to follow the development of thought. The treatment of the Indian ethos and culture from the point of view of Indian philosophy is fascinating. This may be called 'applied Indian philosophy'. In other words, the book presents a panoramic view of Indian philosophy, culture, tradition, and ethos in clear terms.

The author relates the above themes with some external forces from outside India and shows how down the centuries they too have shaped today's Indian society. One point to make here is that Jayaweera has a positive outlook of Indian development in the economic, socio-political, and cultural fields. He has combined well the universal and the particular and material. From these he rises to the spiritual aspects of human existence. In studying the past and analysing the present in the light of what has gone before the author tries to evolve a future for the whole of humanity and envisages a culture that will accommodate diversity and yet bring about unity among all peoples.

Finally, the author invites the readers to leave behind the 'cave mentality'

that restricts our vision and our hearts. Though humanity has come far from the physical caves of our ancestors, it has still to leave the cave of the heart and mind and come out into the light and broadness of vision, so that the present and future generations may concentrate on the task of humanising and spiritualising our global culture. To achieve this goal India's culture can play an important role. In this way Jayaweera ends on a highly positive note, leaving a challenge for each of us.

K.L. GEORGE

**National Development and Tribal Deprivation.** Edited by Walter FERNANDES. New Delhi: Indian Social Institute, 1992. Pp x-403. Rs.120.

As the title of the book indicates this edited work divided into three parts is a discussion on the economically deteriorating plight of the tribal people in the wake of the National Development attempted through our Five Year Plans. Though the integration of the tribals into the mainstream of India seems to be a reality, the process has not taken into consideration the tribals as equal partners of development. They remain subordinates. With this contradiction in mind, the traditional tribal system is studied in the first part of the book. In the second part the nature and form of tribal deprivation are analyzed showing the ugly side of our national development. A search for solution is attempted in the third part.

The socio-cultural and economic value systems of the tribals (community ownership, marriage customs, ecological dependence shifting cultivation, etc.) have been adversely affected by the modern planned development. The modern sense of property rights has shattered many aspects of the tribal community and its very identity. In penetrating articles B.K.Roy Burman ("Historical Process in Respect of Communal Land System and Poverty Alleviations among Tribals"), John Deeney and Walter Fer-

nandes ("Tribals: Their Dependence on Forests, their Traditions and Management Systems"), A.N.T. Joseph ("Ethnozoology of Reptiles in Relation to Health Care Among Tribals in Madhya Pradesh"), and A.K.Gangwar and P.S. Ramakrishnan ("Agriculture and Animal Husbandry among the Sulunga and Nishis of Arunachal Pradesh"), explore the character of the tribal traditions. Various forms of Tribal deprivations are systematically analyzed by L.K. Mahapatra ("Development for Whom? Depriving the Dispossessed Tribals"), Mathew Areeparampil ("Forest Policy and Denial of Tribal Rights"), Philip Viegas ("Land Control and Tribal Struggle for Survival"), M.S.A. Rao ("Non-Tribal Colonisation and Tribal Deprivation in Andhra"), and Geeta Menon ("Tribal Women: Victims of the Development Process"). A search for solutions is attempted by Walter Fernandes, ("Forest Policy: A Solution to Tribal Deprivations?"), P.C. Mohapatra ("The Development of Scheduled Tribes in Orissa"), Rudolf C. Heredia ("Maratha and Tribals: An Evaluation of Approaches to Rural Inequality"), J.M. Heredero ("Milk Cooperatives and Tribal Poverty in Gujarat: The Need of Education and Management"), Bhupinder Singh ("Deepening Dilemmas of Tribals and Technology"), Buddhadeb Chaudhuri ("Social Sciences, Health and Culture: The Tribal Situation"), and Boniface Minz ("The Jhar Khand Movement"). In this part the official solutions (e.g., the Forest Conservation Amendment, 1988), various voluntary community based efforts, and the peoples' solutions are well described.

This book highlights the problems facing our tribal community in the wake of developmental planning; it is a new challenge to the often questioned notion and mode of development. The useful references and detailed indexing make the book all the more appealing to people concerned with the problems of the tribal community.

John CHATHANATT, S.J.

## Scripture

**Reading the Gospel of John. An Introduction.** By Kevin QUAST. New York: Paulist Press, 1991. Pp. viii-165. \$ 8.95 (pbk.). ISBN 0-8091-3297-4.

As the title and the subtitle clearly indicate, the book is meant to introduce the reader to the Gospel of John. It is divided into sixteen chapters, followed by a select bibliography "For Further Reading" and a "Subject Index." Each chapter begins with an introduction, followed by a sort of a running commentary on the Gospel text section by section, and ends with a conclusion which sums up the major thrust of the chapter. Some "Study Questions," given at the end of each chapter, are helpful for the beginners to pay attention to the Gospel text. There are also a number of useful charts and maps in the book.

The introductory chapter mentions some of the characteristic features of the Gospel ("Gospel for all readers," "Gospel of the symbolic," "Gospel of glory," "Gospel of the Spirit," "Gospel of the present"), its background ("The Jewish Base of the Gospel" and "The Beloved Disciple and His Community"), its literary character ("Composition and Arrangement," "Purpose for Writing" and "Structure"). Here Quast provides the reader with a hermeneutical key: "The key to interpreting the Gospel of John can be summarized in one phrase: redemption by relationship. John teaches that salvation comes through believing and knowing the incarnation of faith and truth. Eternal life is lived in relationship to Jesus, God on earth. This relationship involves intimacy, trust, understanding, obedience, and unity of action and will" (p. 3). While the basic insight may be valid, one wonders what "the incarnation of faith" means and whether the Johannine Jesus is simply "God on earth"! Furthermore, the introductory chapter is too short and sketchy and the author seems to be too dependent on R.E. Brown's commentary regarding the Gospel's composition and structure, without taking sufficiently into account more recent scholarly

studies on the matter.

Many of the difficult verses are well explained by Quast. For example, he interprets Jn 16:8-9 as follows: "To convict the world of sin is to convince people that it is wrong to reject Christ. For John, the ultimate sin is unbelief (Jn 16:9). Such unbelief is reprehensible because it issues from rejection, not ignorance, of the saving revelation" (p. 106). But it is also true that some of the enigmatic Johannine phrases such as "doing the truth" (Jn 3:21) are passed over in silence and others like "the son of perdition" (Jn 17:12) are given questionable interpretations, for he says about 17:12: "It is better to read John's phrase as a simple affirmation that Judas was destined to perish as part of the saving plan" (p. 115). Is Quast reading Protestant predestination into the Johannine text?

Quast's book may be described, not so much as a good introduction, but rather as a short commentary on the Gospel of John, which however, is not as good as the one by James McPolin in the *New Testament Message series*. *Reading the Gospel of John* may, however, be recommended for acquisition in Seminary libraries especially for the "Study Questions" appended in every chapter.

George MLAKUZHILY, S.J.

**Buddhavacana and Del Verbum. A Phenomenological and Theological Comparison of Scriptural Inspiration in the Saddharmapundarika Sutra and In the Christian Tradition.** By Michael FUSS. Leiden, etc., E.J. Brill, 1991. Pp. xvi-479. Gld 240, US\$ 137. ISBN 90-04-08991-8.

This Gregorian University doctoral thesis by a priest from Bonn, published in the Brill's Indological Series, no. 3, is really two books in one. The aim of the thesis is to analyse a concrete significant scripture so as to lay the ground for a theological inquiry into its "inspiration". Thus the thesis continues and takes into account the quest started in India about twenty years ago regarding the theological and pastoral significance of the scriptures of the world religions. It should therefore be of interest to the theological



establishment of our country.

In the first chapter which covers half the book the author gives a careful and detailed account of what may be considered the foundational scripture of Mahayana Buddhism, popularly called the Lotus Sutra, composed around the first century CE. The literary genre, the MSS, the textual history, the canonicity, the language, form-critical classification and redactional analysis of the Sutra are examined in detail. The information is gathered from standard Buddhological scholarship, particularly German. Great attention is given to detail, and important words or expressions of the Buddhist tradition are submitted to careful analysis. The 27 tables of Appendix 1 (pp. 361-419) are a mine of information about the Sutra which scholars and students will want to consult. The theology of the Sutra is taken up for a more specific study in the second part of the fourth chapter, where the question of its inspiration is finally tackled within the background of the Justinian theological view of the *logos superlatikos* and the seeds of the Word.

The intermediary chapters 2 and 3 deal with Catholic teaching on inspiration, with special attention to Vatican II and contemporary theological reflection, respectively. In the latter the author gives great importance to inspiration as the written equivalent of revelation and rightly relates it to the mystery of the Word incarnate. I think it should also be more specifically related to the eschatology of revelation, i.e., the mystery of the resurrection of Jesus. Regarding the scriptures of other religions the author says: "If these scriptures show a fundamental openness towards Christ, although admittedly of different quality than the immediately preparatory writings of the OT, and prove to be truly inspired, then they belong in a broad sense to the Church and may find here a new reading in the light of the Christ-event" (285). One may quarrel with the word "belong", but I think that the idea behind the expression can be defended: the validity of the re-reading of these scriptures from within the Christian faith, provided it is

done with openness, humility and respect for the text and the tradition behind it.

The fourth and last chapter intends to bring out the thesis proposed long ago by Indian theologians: the Sutra can be considered as inspired in an analogical sense even if it is not counted as canonical. The author stresses the relation of this understanding of inspiration to the incarnation of the Word in Jesus Christ, and works within the Inclusionist model of a theology of religions. Years ago I drew further reflections and outlined other approaches to this theology in *Indian Theological Studies* (20[1983]16-36), an article which could not mentioned in the rather exhaustive bibliography on the matter completed in March 1983.

One cannot but rejoice at this fresh inquiry into a significant aspect of the theology of religions. Not all will be convinced by the method adopted. Much of the detailed study of the Sutra has little relevance for the theological thesis. The study of the text, its content and role in the faith community of the Mahayana does not of itself establish the basis for the theological affirmation of the reality of inspiration. The strength of the argument depends in great part on the (valid) theological presupposition of the presence and work of the *logos* (or of the Spirit) of God in the history of humanity. But then why speak of such "inspiration" only in relation to "scriptures"? Why not in regard to any other helpful text? And if this is accepted, does not such a broad "analogical" inspiration practically empty "inspiration" of its theological meaning?

The style of the book is heavily teutonic and at places difficult for an English speaker to decipher (e.g., pp. 225, 315...). The external presentation is elegant and attractive as one expects from Brill (at what price!), but the proofreading could be improved: letters are often dropped, not to speak of faulty grammar. The Sanskrit diacritical marks are remarkably well used. "cease" in line 4 of p. 26 should presumably read "cede" or "concede", and chapter 11 on p.226 should

read chapter II. I was puzzled in the analysis of the Sufira: the central chapters are II and XVI ("the kernel") on p. 181; II, VII and XVI on p. 191; but on p. 331 "the kernel" is ch. XI.

Teachers of theology may want to take note of the reported omission (p.228, n.101) of a full and important sentence of DV 24 in Flannery's translation ("The sacred Scriptures contain the Word of God, and because inspired, are the Word of God"). The book has no Index, which is a great pity. It has a long bibliography of all the many areas studied, and the abundant footnotes are in the right place — at the foot of the page. Thanks, publisher!

G.GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

## Asia

*Mystiques d'Asie.* By Joseph MASSON. Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1992. Pp. 300. 145 FF. ISBN 2-220-03301-5.

This book by a seasoned Belgian Indologist brings together under one cover three great mystical traditions of Asia not often put together: Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. The study is both analytic and synthetic, bringing out the specific elements of each tradition and placing them in situation of mutual dialogue. Both the ends and the means of mysticism are given due attention.

The section on Hinduism (II) covers the Upanishads, the Gita, Sankara, Saivism and Vaishnavism, Ramanuja ("the philosopher of the heart"), and Ramakrishna. The next section on Buddhism studies first the original message of Indian Buddhism, then the monistic trends elsewhere in Asia (specially China and Japan), and finally the bhakti mysticism of the Amida and Kannon Buddhism. Islam is studied in Section IV by first facing the problems of mysticism in such a religion of transcendence. Masson then presents the early mystic tradition of the 9th and 10th centuries (al-Bistami and al-Hallaj); the great schools of Junayd, "the spiritual director," (Maneri is not mentioned), Ibn-Sina and al-Ghazzali and other sufis. The discourse is reflec-

tive throughout the work, incisive in its questions, nuanced in its conclusions.

Many may find the first section the most enlightening. It is a kind of synthesis that one could read after the rest of the book. It introduces the meaning of mysticism in clear language but infused with a sense of the mystery, and then asks, Why does mysticism seek? What does it seek? How does it seek? The discussion is clearly from the perspective of Western mind, "the realist pluralist philosophy that nourishes specially the Christian outlook" (73). The natural/supernatural schema is present throughout. Monotheism is incompatible with Monism — and is the revealed Truth. However the philosophical reason remains sufficiently open. Place is made for the mystery of grace and for transcendence, for the abyss of the unknown. The professor puts questions that need to be put. Perhaps he has presuppositions that need to be questioned.

Characteristic of the book are its clarity of thought and language, presented in aptly titled sections and subsections, a frequent recourse to original sources, a sensitive respect for the traditions studied even when questions are raised. A fine reproduction of the *Nataraja* graces the cover page.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

II "Nes Lega." IL Sommo Bene e Fine Ultimo. By Ippolito DESIDERI, S.J. Introd., translation and notes by Giuseppe Toscano, S.X. (Opere tibetane di Ippolito Desideri, S.J. Vol. IV). Roma: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1989. Pp. 359. N.p.

Desideri is an extraordinary Italian Jesuit who spent just six years in Tibet in the early 18th century and during the time learned not only Tibetan so as to be able to converse with the learned monks and write books in that language, but also the philosophy of Mahayana Buddhism then prevailing in the Roof of the World. While his Italian works were published long ago, his Tibetan writings had never been published until in 1981 the Xaverian Fr Toscano began reproducing

them by modern printing methods and presenting them to the world of scholars with rich introductions, notes and a complete Italian translation. Four volumes have so far been published: in 1981 the *T'o-Rana*, "The Dawn" or a propaedeutic of a Christian apologetic; in 1982 the *Snin-Po* or the essence of the Christian religion; in 1984 the *Byun-K'uns*, a theodicy of God the Creator; and in 1989 the work under review. I had reviewed the first two volumes in *Indian Church History Review* 18 (1984) 154-8 and given an account of the same and of the work of Desideri in *Ignis Studies* 3 (1986) 26-34.

The volume under review contains a treatise on "The Supreme Good, the Final End." It starts with the definition of the Supreme Good as the goal of all who do good and virtuous deeds and affirms that the Supreme Good must be Self-existing, Uncaused, Perfection itself and a Substance. We see that Desideri enters from the very beginning into a serious intellectual discourse with the Buddhist tradition. He leads to this Supreme Being through an analysis of knowledge in dialogue with Mayayana epistemology and metaphysics. The Path must lead to a goal. Desideri shows how to arrive to the knowledge of the Supreme Being. Here the language passes from philosophy to spirituality.

Part II explains that the Supreme Being exists by Its very nature and is a substance (read subsistence?). Other things are not substances, they are *sunya*, (relative) emptiness, because they do not "have" their own nature. Only the Supreme Being exists of Itself and this, affirms Desideri, does not contradict the philosophy of the Madhyamika school. Part III explains the nature of the Supreme Being, the Fullness of all Perfections, the Source of all Good for human beings. Part IV deals with the Supreme Being as the noble Refuge, the *saranam* of the Buddhist tradition. Finally Part V shows how in reaching the Supreme Being the human attains perfect happiness.

Even if his theology is now dated one cannot but admire the capacity of

Desideri to master so much in a relatively short time. Toscano identifies thirty-eight important Mahayana texts quoted by Desideri in this work. Leading Tibetologists such as Tuod and Petech have long recognised the outstanding contribution of Desideri to their field. Clearly he was an intense man; he himself tells us that he "felt an incredible ardor in applying himself . . . to a well-founded study of the language" every day of his life in Tibet, living on tea alone from morning to sundown and having his one meal at night so as to be more fit for his task of study.

The Tibetan text of the work covers 96 pages of this edition. The rest is a rich bibliography, including the list of works cited by Desideri, an introduction to and a summary of the work and the translation with valuable notes. The book ends with an Italian-Tibetan "Desiderian Glossary."

We end of this review with the last words of Toscano's Introduction: "This work is a true but indirect refutation of Buddhism. Its purpose in reality is to show the existence of God and the existence of a reward in an Eternal Life after death. In this way Desideri touches the heart of the Buddhist philosophy. But his polemic is not harsh. It is rather an exposition of the beauty of the Christian doctrine. One would say that rather than polemic it was an invitation to the Tibetans to consider the Christian truth, explained to them on the basis of their philosophy and their method of disputation. One could ask: Had the book been finalised and published, would Desideri have succeeded in convincing the Buddhists? The question cannot be answered, but even if he had not succeeded we cannot but admire the effort and the competence with which Desideri carried out his discourse" (41-2). The publication is important for the history of the missions in Tibet and the Christian-Buddhist dialogue. Would that an English version was available! The title page and cover page date the publication in 1989. The last page, however, informs us that the printing was completed in July 1990.

G. GISPert-SAUCH, S.J.

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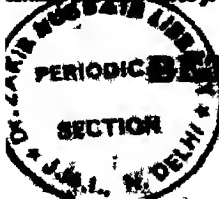
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